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About the CTC Sentinel

The Combating Terrorism Center is an independent educational and research institution based in the Department of Social Sciences at the United States Military Academy, West Point. The CTC Sentinel harnesses the Center's global network of scholars and practitioners to understand and confront contemporary threats posed by terrorism and other forms of political violence.

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The Death of Usama bin Ladin: Threat Implications for the U.S. Homeland

By Philip Mudd



President Barack Obama attends a wreath laying ceremony at Ground Zero after the death of Bin Ladin. - Photo by Mario Tama/Getty Images

WITH THE DEATH of Usama bin Ladin in May 2011, Americans will be safer in the long-term.

Without Bin Ladin's magnetic appeal, al-Qa`ida's revolutionary movement will likely wither and its message, combined with the peaceful revolutions in the Arab world, will lose credibility. In the short-term, however, the U.S. homeland remains at risk. In many ways, U.S. security services today face more challenges than ever before because the threat profile has become so diverse, with multiple terrorist groups and individuals—many with no connection to established terrorist organizations—intent on striking the United States.

In the wake of 9/11, for example, al-Qa`ida sought to maintain momentum by planning and executing another “spectacular” attack on the U.S. homeland. American authorities found

that subsequent terrorist plots targeting the homeland were tied directly back to operational planners in al-Qa`ida's core organization.¹ Threat briefings at the time were not yet dominated by homegrown terrorists, or by militants part of al-Qa`ida's affiliate groups. As a result, U.S. intelligence resources could focus on a hard target—al-Qa`ida's operationally savvy leadership—with the classic tools of human and technical penetration and partnership with an informal global network of security services. Today, authorities have to detect plots that may have no connection to established terrorist groups or known operatives.

¹ In the immediate years after 9/11, the mix of U.S.-centric intelligence reporting from human and technical sources, as well as detainees, regularly flowed from the tribal areas of the Pakistan-Afghanistan border.

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Indeed, the stream of broken terrorist plots in the United States offers a striking contrast to those early, core al-Qa`ida-driven plotlines. From Somali youth in Minnesota to individuals across regions of the United States, the broken plots frequently involve youth who were ideologically inspired by the al-Qa`ida revolution, but the plotters had never met an al-Qa`ida member. Bin Ladin's death in Pakistan may well accelerate this shift in plots from those with some linkage to al-Qa`ida—training, funding, or operational guidance—to those only inspired by a message.

In conjunction with these unaffiliated extremists, the United States also faces growing threats from al-Qa`ida's affiliate organizations, such as its branch in Yemen known as al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) that was responsible for two recent plots on the U.S. homeland. Without the leadership coherence Bin Ladin brought to al-Qa`ida, subordinate commanders might pursue their own plotlines more aggressively, resulting in different threat strands directed against the United States. Before Bin Ladin's death, these threats may have developed under a more unified al-Qa`ida umbrella as documents recently found in Bin Ladin's compound show that he had direct involvement in pressing for attacks against the U.S. homeland. Today, however, al-Qa`ida operatives or affiliated militants may seek to attack the United States without any consultation with al-Qa`ida's core leadership or other al-Qa`ida affiliates, making plot detection more difficult. These efforts might run in parallel to the cementing role of AQAP as the successor to the leadership in Pakistan, especially for Western Muslims who might be susceptible to the English-language propaganda of Samir Khan, Anwar al-`Awlaqi, and *Inspire* magazine.

This article explains why Bin Ladin's death will weaken al-Qa`ida's central leadership, as well as al-Qa`ida's ideological attraction. Yet it warns that the threat from al-Qa`ida's affiliates, such as AQAP in Yemen, will only grow more pronounced now that Bin Ladin is dead. The article concludes by showing why U.S. authorities face an even greater challenge today, as threat detection has become more labor intensive due to the disconnected nature of current terrorist plots.

Bin Ladin's Death Will Weaken Al-Qa`ida's Central Leadership

In the long-term, Bin Ladin's death will reduce al-Qa`ida ideological reach in the West. His ability to generate star power that attracted a wave of disaffected youth worldwide to the al-Qa`ida banner is now gone. Bin Ladin was a revolutionary, not just an operational leader, and the already-declining revolutionary message of al-Qa`ida will wither faster without its undisputed leading messenger. Over time, the decline in al-Qa`ida's ability to recruit followers virtually will help reduce the threat to the United States. Ayman al-Zawahiri, the group's second-in-charge, lacks Bin Ladin's global appeal, and he is not as respected within the organization. Al-Zawahiri was seen as fractious and difficult during his time leading Egyptian Islamic Jihad, and he has never been nearly as revered among al-Qa`ida acolytes as has Bin Ladin. Furthermore, he lacks Bin Ladin's charisma globally, and his public pronouncements veer from those of a respected leader to angry diatribes. He almost certainly will lack the ability to keep the organization focused with strong leadership, and the group may suffer leadership fissures, or even fractures, as leaders buck al-Zawahiri's command and consider how to move forward among themselves.

Some commentators have suggested that the al-Qa`ida core group in Pakistan might execute an "off-the-shelf" operation quickly in retaliation. Yet al-Qa`ida's core leadership has been struggling to conduct attacks against the U.S. homeland for years, and Bin Ladin's death will only impede this further. Information acquired from Bin Ladin's compound in Pakistan indicate that he was pressing, repeatedly and over time, for more attacks; his group's inability to act on his insistent demand for more plots suggests that al-Qa`ida still lacks capacity in the West, and rapid-turnaround plotting might simply lead to less sophisticated attacks such as the shooting of the Saudi Embassy employee in Pakistan in mid-May. Moreover, al-Qa`ida's leadership will highlight security in the coming weeks as they absorb the implications of their leader's death and try to determine how it occurred.

Even if a plot is being prepared, the group's past operations clearly show that cell leaders will move when they are ready, not according to symbolic timetables. The security risks of delaying an operation for any amount of time are too high to hold operatives in check for long periods. Their failures

“An attack in six months would be a success in the eyes of the adversary, and a six month timeframe, although long for Americans, would seem insignificant if the target were substantial enough.”

in the United States have been frequent: allowing a plot to sit on the back-burner would strike an operator as a mistake in an environment where days and weeks raise the risk that U.S. intelligence and law enforcement will identify plotters.

Without Bin Ladin's captivating appeal, the key question in coming months, beyond whether al-Qa`ida members in the tribal areas unite or begin to fragment, will be whether affiliated groups, especially in Yemen, redouble efforts to strike an iconic U.S. target. Their motive would be not only to avenge the death of Bin Ladin, but also to highlight their emergence as a new center of jihadist gravity for recruits and donors who feel they cannot travel to Pakistan's border belt or who may decline to donate to a group that is losing credibility because of inaction.

The Threat From Al-Qa`ida's Affiliates

AQAP, widely acknowledged as the most significant threat to the U.S. homeland outside of core al-Qa`ida, already has leadership that is benefiting from Westerners. Its propaganda is augmented by an egotist jihadist, Anwar al-`Awlaqi, who appears to be as focused on spreading his brand as on developing the more detached Bin Ladinist image of a charismatic, thoughtful leader who is above the fray. If there is an opportunity to insert a trainee from the Arabian Peninsula into North America, AQAP will be able to

springboard from Bin Ladin's death to an opportunistic strike focused as much on casualties as on branding AQAP as the new al-Qa`ida center of action. Al-`Awlaqi's access to Western recruits, in a country that is seen as both an inexpensive center for Arabic language training and an easier travel destination than Pakistan's tribal areas, may well translate into a steady stream of plots against the U.S. homeland emanating from Yemen, especially if AQAP's leadership attempts a less strategic, more scattershot approach to targeting.

AQAP may redouble efforts to hit hard targets—embassies and other facilities that were targeted earlier in the decade but that are now too difficult to reach for most extremist cells—but these efforts would take some time, perhaps months, to organize. Similarly, the attempt against a U.S. airliner over Detroit in December 2009 suggests that they might push again for an iconic target on U.S. soil; with the number of recruits from which they can draw, including a large volume of U.S. students in Yemen, homeland plotting is a certainty. The lawlessness of Yemen might now give them the time and space to plot carefully. The training and plotting opportunities in Yemen might be coupled with more sophisticated recruiting. Al-`Awlaqi's use of the internet shows AQAP's media savvy toward the West, and the recent plot involving a British Airways employee underscores the fact that AQAP can be technologically adaptive, similar to the efforts of al-Qa`ida's core plotters to find potential candidates from YouTube.

Revenge attacks by all al-Qa`ida affiliates will put a premium on personal safety for U.S. businesses operating overseas. Companies and individuals will probably witness strikes against high-profile locations such as hotels, resorts, nightclubs, bars, or other locations in high-threat areas that are known as venues where Westerners gather; these are easy to organize, have soft security, and are highly recognizable internationally. Besides the threat from al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), like-minded militants in Indonesia, for example, have repeatedly targeted Westerners, and the rise of independents in Indonesia who appear at the center of plots there all raise the prospect that they might be an

outlier threat in coming years, pushing not only for more strikes internally but for more targeting elsewhere. It is also possible that terrorists might target U.S. strategic interests, such as oil facilities, but this is less likely. Strategic sites are not easy to access for terrorists seeking a fast fix for vengeance. As with copycat plots in the United States during recent years—such as the backpack bomb plotters in New York—soft strikes overseas against cultural emblems such as nightclubs could easily spark copycat attempts in the United States.

Time will favor jihadists from Yemen and elsewhere as they seek to avenge the death of Bin Ladin by hitting Americans at home. They are committed, and their sense of time is different from the

“Even harder to track are the local threats, youth who lack connectivity to couriers, communications, or trainers from known terrorist entities. The ideology that motivates them is dying, but its death is proving unsurprisingly slow.”

short lenses of Western publics and governments. From the Western optic, no retaliatory response in the next two months would lead many to suspect that nothing is being prepared, and that the slow crippling of the al-Qa`ida movement has accelerated. This would be a mistake. An attack in six months would be a success in the eyes of the adversary, and a six month timeframe, although long for Americans, would seem insignificant if the target were substantial enough.

The Growing Challenges for Security Services

Time will not favor security services, including federal, state, and local law enforcement in the United States. The plots that crossed security officials' desks every morning nine years ago often emanated from core al-Qa`ida, and more plots—significant, but still declining in number—will appear on the daily Threat Matrix as the inheritors of

Bin Ladin's mantle, such as AQAP, try to make a name for themselves to prove to those who fund them and travel for training that they are still in the game. Even harder to track are the local threats, youth who lack connectivity to couriers, communications, or trainers from known terrorist entities. The ideology that motivates them is dying, but its death is proving unsurprisingly slow. Bin Ladin's message has been compelling: overthrow corrupt leaders and return to a time that better reflects Islam's golden age. His death may accelerate the decline of that message—especially combined with the peaceful revolutions sweeping the Arab world—but it may take years.

The expansion of the threat base in the United States will raise the risk of a successful, lower-level plot. More diverse plotters make intelligence and prevention far more difficult to track. With the overdone reaction to Bin Ladin's demise, there is no focus on the nature of plots in the past few years. There have been plots linked to al-Qa`ida's core leadership, such as Najibullah Zazi's plan to attack targets in New York, as well as attacks from like-minded militants, sometimes called homegrown, such as Nidal Malik Hasan who went on a shooting rampage at Ft. Hood in Texas. Additionally, there have been plots or terrorist activity from al-Qa`ida affiliates or associated groups: the Pakistani Taliban (implicated in the Times Square bombing and Miami funding cases), Lashkar-i-Tayyiba (implicated in David Headley's activities), AQAP (implicated in the December 2009 airliner plot as well as the October 2010 cargo planes plot), and al-Shabab (implicated in a number of recruitment efforts where members of the Somali diaspora in the United States traveled to fight in Somalia). All of these disparate plots and activities demonstrate why security services in the United States will be overburdened in tracking multiple, unconnected strands of intelligence.

In the midst of budget limitations and competing priorities—Mexican cartels, the rise of national gangs, and the continued threat of drug violence in city streets—spending money chasing less sophisticated al-Qa`ida fellow travelers may well lose traction. The operations of today are labor intensive: finding

small clusters of youth in major cities and following them to determine the extent of their networks is painstaking, and these clusters' lack of connectivity means that they are hard to find through national intelligence programs. Local law enforcement, with federal support, will be crucial, but expensive. In the past, most plots were uncovered by federal authorities, who needed local support and who operated in an environment where there were fewer questions about the threat or the need to spend on counterterrorism programs.

Conclusion

The commitment of al-Qa`ida ideologues has proven durable over time. They believe what they are doing is not only right, but required, and religiously sanctioned. Too many commentators are already speaking of Bin Ladin's demise as a "watershed," with the implication that threat in critical areas, particularly the United States, might decline as a result. Over the long-term, this makes sense: a revolutionary movement will ultimately fail if the message lacks credibility. Yet as the series of broken homegrown plots in the United States has proven during recent years, the half-life of revolutions is long. Smaller, more dispersed, less lethal operations might initially appear to represent a rising threat of homegrown extremists. This is unlikely. Without a standard-bearer, and in the midst of the decline in the al-Qa`ida messaging draw in recent years, homegrown strikes in the United States would more likely represent the adoption of al-Qa`ida's ideology by a small group who have no hope of sparking the kind of global wave many feared in the years after 9/11.

Bin Ladin's death makes the United States safer in the long-term, but still at risk in the short-term. It is critical not to lose focus on, or divert resources from, the terrorist threat facing the U.S. homeland almost 10 years after 9/11.

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Terrorist Tactics in Pakistan Threaten Nuclear Weapons Safety

By Shaun Gregory

TWO HIGH-PROFILE attacks by terrorists on highly secure military bases in Pakistan, the first on the General Headquarters of the Pakistan Army in Rawalpindi in October 2009 and the second on the naval aviation base at PNS Mehran near Karachi in May 2011, have renewed international anxiety about the safety and security of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal.

This article addresses several worrying trends in Pakistan that are coming together to suggest that the safety and security of nuclear weapons materials in Pakistan may very well be compromised at some point in the future.

The Growing Challenge of Securing Pakistan's Nuclear Arsenal

In recent months, a variety of media sources have reported a significant escalation of nuclear weapons production by Pakistan. According to some of these sources, Pakistan has been building between 12 and 15 nuclear weapons a year, effectively doubling the size of its nuclear arsenal during the past three to four years to around 100 nuclear weapons.¹ More disconcerting, Pakistan is engaged in a rapid expansion of its fissile material production through two new reactors, the Khushab II, thought to be operating in some form since 2009, and Khushab III, which has been under construction since 2005-2006 and is likely to come on-stream around 2013-2014. There is further evidence from the respected Washington-based Institute for Science and International Security that a fourth Khushab reactor may also be under early phase construction.² Intended primarily to offset rival India's conventional military advantage, the open-ended escalation of Pakistan's nuclear weapons production explains why Pakistan has led the opposition

to the international Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT), a treaty which would cap fissile material stockpiles.

Aside from the intricate politics of international arms control, the steady rise in the size of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal presents the rather more prosaic, though arguably more serious, challenge of ensuring the physical security of an ever increasing number of nuclear assets. This is not a simple matter. Safeguarding 100 weapons is a significantly greater challenge than safeguarding 50 weapons because strategic and operational realities require that those weapons are dispersed and that dispersal locations are adapted to the complex requirements of safely and securely storing nuclear weapons in various degrees of operational readiness.³ As Pakistan's nuclear arsenal grows in the years ahead, these challenges will multiply.

As many as 70,000 people in Pakistan reportedly have access to, or knowledge of, some element of the Pakistani nuclear weapons production, storage, maintenance, and deployment cycle, from those involved in the manufacture of fissile material, through those engaging in nuclear weapons design, assembly and maintenance, to those who transport and safeguard the weapons in storage and would deploy the weapons in crises.⁴ That number will also rise steadily as the size of the nuclear arsenal grows.

3 If concentrated in too small a sub-set of locations, the weapons constitute a lucrative and vulnerable set of targets.

4 This figure includes the 8,000-10,000 staff of Pakistan's Strategic Plans Division and 7,000-8,000 scientists of whom 2,000 are reported to have "critical knowledge" of Pakistan's nuclear weapons. The latter figure was originally attributed to the director of the Strategic Plans Division, Lieutenant General Khalid Kidwai, in January 2009. For details, see David E. Sanger, "Obama's Worst Pakistan Nightmare," *New York Times*, January 8, 2009. It also includes up to 18,000 troops reported to guard the nuclear assets. For details, see Andrew Bast, "Pakistan's Nuclear Surge," *Newsweek*, May 15, 2011. For a development of these issues, see Christopher Clary, "Thinking About Pakistan's Nuclear Security in Peacetime, Crisis and War," Institute for Defence Studies & Analysis, September 2010; Matthew Bunn, "Securing the Bomb 2010," Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard University, April 2010.

1 Karen DeYoung, "New Estimates Put Pakistan's Nuclear Arsenal at More than 100," *Washington Post*, January 31, 2011.

2 "Pakistan Appears to Expand Nuclear Site - Report," Reuters, February 10, 2011. For fuller details of this expansion, see the Institute for Science and International Security's website at www.isis-online.org.

This figure is important because of the complex and highly polarized debates about nuclear weapons safety and security in Pakistan. All sides of that debate agree that Pakistan has, with considerable U.S. assistance, put in place a range of robust measures to seek to assure the safety and security of its nuclear weapons. The consensus breaks down, however, on the issue of whether

“Terrorist groups have now shown themselves capable of penetrating even the most securely defended of Pakistan’s military bases and of holding space within those bases for many hours even against the elite SSG, more than enough time with the right equipment and sufficient numbers to carry out terrorist acts with enormous political or destructive pay-off.”

these measures provide adequate safety and security for Pakistan’s nuclear arsenal. The Pakistan Army, which has overall control of the weapons, and Pakistan’s government argue forcefully that they do, although even they have recently moderated their statements of reassurance.⁵ Critics point to a number of vulnerabilities that place these reassurances in some doubt. These vulnerabilities boil down to three core concerns: a) that the physical security of

⁵ It is interesting that the official Pakistani narrative has moved from a comprehensive insistence that Pakistan’s nuclear weapons are totally safe and secure, to a rather less absolute (and more realistic) acceptance that Pakistan’s nuclear weapons are “at least as safe and secure as those of any other nuclear country.” This is an important change because all nuclear weapons states that have put information in the public domain have accepted that accidents, breaches of security, and unintended events are an inevitable part of operating a nuclear arsenal. None of these states, however, face the terrorist threat level that confronts Pakistan. For senior Pakistani articulation of the latter position, see, for example, “Strategic Assets Are Safe, Says FO,” *Dawn*, November 13, 2007.

nuclear weapons—across the weapons cycle—may not be robust enough to withstand determined terrorist assault; b) that among the estimated 70,000 people with access to the nuclear weapons cycle, some may be willing to collude in various ways with terrorists;⁶ c) that the threat extends beyond terrorists gaining access to complete and viable nuclear weapons, and include the immense political and security implications of terrorists gaining access to fissile material, nuclear weapons components, or penetrating nuclear weapons facilities.

A July 2009 article in the *CTC Sentinel* explained in detail the robust measures Pakistan has established to assure the safety and security of its nuclear weapons. It argued that terrorists have shown themselves able to carry out violent attacks at facilities that were reliably identified as having a nuclear weapons role. These facilities include the military complex at Wah, suspected to be involved in the manufacture of nuclear weapons parts; Kamra, suspected to be the designated base for the dispersal of nuclear assets in a crisis; and Sargodha, suspected to be a storage facility for nuclear delivery systems.⁷

⁶ There must also be a risk that among this number are terrorists or their sympathizers who have applied for jobs to gain access to part of the weapons cycle, with the smuggling of fissile material a key vector of concern. For an insightful analysis of these issues, see Brian Cloughley, “Fission Fears,” *Jane’s Intelligence Review*, April 2011.

⁷ It must be conceded here that the claimed roles of the sites at Wah and Kamra are robustly contested by some in Pakistan and cannot be definitively resolved on the basis of unclassified sources. Wah is Pakistan’s main conventional weapons production facility and home to at least 14 separate complexes dealing with technologies including explosives, heavy artillery ammunition, steel and alloy, propellants, and weapons manufacture. These are precisely the subset of technologies necessary to manufacture and assemble the non-nuclear components of nuclear weapons (warhead cases, conventional explosive triggers, etc.) into which the fissile core can be fitted. In the absence of comparable alternative facilities in Pakistan, Wah remains the most likely location for the manufacture and assembly of nuclear weapons parts. What is less clear is whether fissile material is enriched or otherwise worked at Wah or whether fissile material is brought to Wah for final assembly. For details on these matters, see www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/world/pakistan/wah.htm and www.cns.miis.edu/reports/pdfs/pakistan.pdf. Pakistan’s Air Weapons Complex Kamra,

In none of these cases, however, were the terrorist attacks themselves aimed at penetrating the bases or at seizing nuclear assets; rather, they were mass casualty bomb attacks that took advantage of the fact that Pakistani security personnel were concentrated and relatively static at base entry points as they waited to go through security barriers.⁸ Some analysts criticized the article, arguing that: a) terrorists in Pakistan had never shown themselves capable of penetrating high security bases; b) that the secrecy of Pakistan’s nuclear weapons sites would ensure that terrorists could not know the locations of the weapons. Within a few months, the validity of both these counterarguments would be seriously undermined when Pakistani militants penetrated the Pakistan Army’s General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi.

The Attack on Pakistan’s Army Headquarters

On October 10, 2009, Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Lashkar-i-Jhangvi militants staged an audacious attack on the Pakistan Army’s GHQ in Rawalpindi, arguably one of the most secure military complexes in Pakistan, housing within its sprawling campus not only the chief of army staff, but also many of Pakistan’s most senior military commanders, including the director-general of the Strategic Plans Division (SPD) and the director-general of Strategic Forces Command (SFC)—Pakistan’s two most senior operational nuclear commanders.

close to Wah, is reported to have a role in air-delivered nuclear weapons and to be a dispersal site for aircraft armed with nuclear weapons in crises. For details, see www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/world/pakistan/kamra.htm and Paul Kerr and Mary Beth Nikitin, “Pakistan’s Nuclear Weapons: Proliferation and Security Issues,” Congressional Research Service, January 13, 2011, available at www.fas.org/sgp/crs/nuke/RL34248.pdf. There was no similar contestation of Sargodha’s possible role as a storage facility for nuclear ballistic missiles. For details on Sargodha, see www.globalsecurity.org/wmd/world/pakistan/sargodha.htm.

⁸ The sources used in the article make entirely clear the nature of the attacks to which the argument was referring. See Shaun Gregory, “The Terrorist Threat to Pakistan’s Nuclear Weapons,” *CTC Sentinel* 2:7 (2009).

The modalities of this attack add up to a virtual blueprint for a successful attack on a nuclear weapons facility:

- the penetration of layers of security checkpoints, barriers, and obstacles on the approach to the sensitive military site;
- the terrorist use of army uniforms and—according to some reports—a military vehicle with appropriate license plates, and forged ID cards, to deceive checkpoint personnel;
- the use of a safe house relatively close to the target site for several weeks before the operation to allow the build-up of a detailed intelligence picture;
- the use of a “sensitive” map (or maps) of the GHQ to allow detailed operational planning. The use of this map (or maps) point to one of two main possibilities: either that the attack had inside help, or that this kind of sensitive information is poorly controlled by the Pakistan Army/ISI;
- use of the kind of weaponry—small-arms, grenades and suicide vests—which allow final tier barrier defenses to be penetrated;
- use of tactics that allow final tier barriers to be penetrated: grenades and/or suicide detonations at entry points which then allow penetration by follow-up commando-style groups;
- use of diversionary tactics: attacking one gate first to draw off and weaken the defenses at a secondary entry point, perhaps closer to the main objective.⁹

In all, at least 10 terrorists were involved in the operation, with four attacking the first gate, and a further six attacking the second gate. The terrorists gained entry to the complex where they took at least 40 people hostage. It took the Pakistan Army's elite commandos, the Special Service Group (SSG), more than 20 hours to

kill or capture all of the militants and free most of the hostages. Two civilians, seven Pakistani soldiers and five SSG commandos were killed in the raid.

In the months that followed the assault, several other disturbing aspects about the attack emerged. Among these was the assertion that intelligence about the attacks had been known to Pakistan's Punjab government well before October

“A frontal assault of this kind on nuclear weapons storage facilities, which are the most robustly defended elements of Pakistan's nuclear weapons cycle, is no longer an implausible event.”

10 and that this intelligence had even been published in two Pakistani newspapers, *The News International* and *The Daily Jhang*, four days before the attack, but had been ignored by the Pakistan Army and ISI.¹⁰ It also emerged that the terrorists had, ironically, almost certainly learned their tactics from the SSG, which had trained earlier generations of Pakistani/Kashmiri militants in similar tactics for operations against India. In addition, there was a concerted effort by the Pakistan Army and ISI to manipulate the media reporting of the attacks, forcing several private TV channels temporarily off the air, contradicting or retracting certain details, and seeking to play down the significance of the assault.¹¹

The second set of features of the attack relate to secrecy, and they weaken the argument that Pakistan can ultimately rely on concealment to protect its nuclear assets. The use of “sensitive” maps in the attack, the time and proximity to conduct intelligence gathering, the level of knowledge of details such as uniforms, military

plates, and possibly ID cards, point to a high level of terrorist knowledge of sensitive military information and protocols, whether through insider help or not. Furthermore, detailed knowledge of Pakistan's security force movements and *modus operandi* has been a consistent feature of terrorist actions in Pakistan for many years, from the repeated assassination attempts against former President Pervez Musharraf, at least one of which included the insider involvement of Pakistani military officers,¹² through the targeting of the ISI headquarters and vehicles,¹³ to the murders of senior military figures.¹⁴

Pakistan's Nuclear Security at Risk

In this context, given that nuclear weapons and delivery systems demand construction and other visible physical necessities (such as road widening, unusual levels of security, and bunker construction), and given that the growth of the Pakistani nuclear arsenal will significantly expand the construction of nuclear weapons infrastructure and the number of individuals with nuclear-related roles, it is simply not possible that the location of all of Pakistan's nuclear weapons can remain unknown to terrorists in perpetuity.¹⁵

As evidence of this, on August 28, 2009, the U.S. Federation of American Scientists published the first open source satellite imagery of a suspected Pakistani nuclear weapons storage facility near Masroor airbase outside Karachi.¹⁶ Within its perimeter walls,

9 This list has been put together from interviews and a range of sources, including: “Press Review: Rawalpindi Attack,” BBC, October 12, 2009; Shahid Rao, “Terror Attack on GHQ,” *The Nation*, October 11, 2009; Pakistan's Inter Services Public Relations, press releases, May 2011; Hassan Abbas, “Deciphering the Attack on Pakistan's Army Headquarters,” *Foreign Policy*, October 11, 2009.

10 “GHQ Attack Report Published in Daily Jhang, The News on 5th October,” *The News International*, October 11, 2009.

11 These are some of the reasons it is difficult to be definitive about all of the attack details.

12 “Air Force Officers Held for Attack on General Musharraf,” *Daily Telegraph*, November 5, 2006.

13 “Bombers Hit Pakistan Spy Agency,” BBC, November 13, 2009.

14 Those killed include Lieutenant General Mushtaq Baig, at the time Pakistan's surgeon general, blown up at a road junction in February 2008, and Major General Amir Faisal Alvi, former head of the SSG, gunned down on his way home. See respectively “Rawalpindi Suicide Blast: Kills 8 with Pakistan Army Surgeon General,” *Pakistan Times*, February 25, 2008; Syed Shoaib Hasan, “Top Pakistan Ex-Commando Killed,” BBC, November 19, 2008.

15 Nor should it be doubted that some terrorists at least continue to seek nuclear weapons or components. For an interesting discussion, see Abdul Bakier, “Jihadis Discuss Plans to Seize Nuclear Assets,” *Terrorism Monitor* 7:4 (2009).

16 To view the U.S. Federation of American Scientists' document, see www.fas.org/blog/ssp/category/pakistan.

the satellite image shows three potential storage bunkers linked by looping roads.¹⁷ The fact that this image is available online, and that the unusual configuration of the base is clear, argues strongly that knowledge of the location of at least some nuclear weapons storage and other related facilities has reached terrorists in Pakistan.

As the number of nuclear weapons facilities grows, and the number of those with access to nuclear weapons or related components rises, the complex challenge of assuring the security of nuclear weapons and nuclear weapons components will become ever more difficult. Terrorist groups have now shown themselves capable of penetrating even the most securely defended of Pakistan's military bases and of holding space within those bases for many hours even against the elite SSG, more than enough time with the right equipment and sufficient numbers to carry out terrorist acts with enormous political or destructive pay-off, from video broadcasts with the attention of the world's media, through potentially destroying by explosions nuclear weapons or materials and the creation of a radiological hazard, to the possibility of the theft of nuclear weapons components or materials for subsequent terrorist use.

Indeed, on May 22-23, 2011, only about 15 miles from the suspected nuclear weapons storage facility near Masroor, a major terrorist attack targeted the naval aviation base at PNS Mehran in Karachi. Early reports suggest that between six and ten terrorists stormed the high security base from several entry points, that they had knowledge of the location of intruder detection cameras that they were able to bypass, and that they penetrated deep inside the base before using rocket-propelled grenades, explosives and small-arms to destroy several aircraft and take hostages. It took the base security and additional Pakistan Army rangers and commandos more than 18 hours to end the siege. At least 13 people were killed.

A frontal assault of this kind on nuclear weapons storage facilities, which are the most robustly defended elements of Pakistan's nuclear weapons cycle, is no longer an implausible event. The successful location and penetration of such a site by terrorists, even if they were ultimately unsuccessful in accessing nuclear assets, would itself be a transformative event both in terms of the U.S.-Pakistani nuclear relationship and in terms of international anxiety about the security of Pakistan's nuclear weapons. Such an assault would also critically undermine Pakistan's reassurances about the security of nuclear weapons elsewhere in the weapons cycle, particularly in transit. As the number of Pakistani nuclear weapons inexorably continues to rise, and as the nuclear weapons security challenges thereby steadily multiply, the odds that Pakistan's nuclear weapons security will eventually be compromised continue to rise.

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The Syrian Uprising: Evaluating the Opposition

By Mahmud Hasan

IN MID-MARCH 2011, the arrest and torture of teenagers who had written anti-regime graffiti sparked a wave of demonstrations in the southern Syrian city of Deraa. As a result of the brutal reaction by security forces, protests rapidly escalated and spread to the coastal cities of Latakia and Banyas, the suburbs of Damascus, and the central governorates of Homs, Hama, and Idlib. Protestors initially demanded democratic reforms, yet the Syrian government's violent response to the demonstrations—which has now taken the form of armored divisions besieging the rebellious towns and cities—has led many to openly call for the fall of the regime.

From the point of view of the authorities, the most threatening phase of the uprising so far was the massive demonstration that saw tens of thousands flooding the main square of Homs, Syria's third largest city, on April 19. Following the bloody suppression of the gathering, the Syrian Ministry of Interior declared that the country was witnessing "an armed insurgency" aimed at "establishing Salafi emirates."¹ Such discourse is beyond any doubt part of a poor attempt at concealing the fact that the regime is actually facing a genuine popular uprising. Nevertheless, it has succeeded in convincing part of the population, in particular members of religious minorities that have been traumatized by the failed Islamic revolution of the early 1980s, that Islamist militants are seeking to take control of the state. Moreover, if the situation deteriorates further, the regime might well create the reality it pretends to fight, as its unrestricted use of violence against civilians and manipulation of sectarian divides are likely to fuel Sunni radicalism.

Assessing the Depth of the Crisis

To some extent, the bloody crushing of the 1979-1982 Islamist uprising in Syria was the last stage of the coup carried out by the Ba'ath Party in 1963. Indeed, what Syrians still remember as "the events"

17 Ibid.

1 Syrian Arab News Agency, April 19, 2011.

were nothing but the final showdown between a regime dominated by sons of peasants, the most powerful of them belonging to the Alawite minority,² and the scions of their historical foes, the conservative Sunni merchants.

As for the current wave of unrest, it seems to be exactly the opposite. The central quarters of Damascus and Aleppo have remained relatively calm so far, which suggests that despite widespread corruption and unfair competition on the part of regime cronies, the majority of the merchant bourgeoisie has benefited enough from the last decade of economic liberalization to prioritize stability.

Instead, the uprising started in Deraa, the administrative center of the Hauran, a Sunni rural and tribal region that is a historical stronghold of the ruling Ba`ath Party. Indeed, it is the homeland of such senior officials as Vice President Faruq al-Shara` and Vice President of the National Progressive Front (the alliance composed of the Ba`ath and satellite parties) Suleiman al-Qaddah. It must be noted that unofficial media outlets of the intelligence service have attacked al-Qaddah, apparently for his lack of enthusiasm at supporting the regime's repressive policies, which have also been openly denounced by several representatives of the Deraa governorate in the (rump) national parliament.³ All of this, in addition to the rallying of senior local clerics and tribal leaders to the "revolution," suggests that the movement relies on a broad popular base that encompasses both the grassroots and the notables.

Other signs that a significant part of the Ba`ath's rural support base has turned against the regime have come from the

governorates of Homs, Hama and Idlib, in central Syria, where many villages and agricultural towns (al-Rastan, Talbisa, Ariha) have witnessed large and brutally suppressed demonstrations.

Other major hotbeds of unrest have been the suburbs and satellite towns of Damascus (in particular Duma, Ma`damiyya, and Dariya) that are home to members of the working and lower middle-classes.

These developments at first suggest that the current events have an obvious social and economic dimension and might be seen as consequences of the regime's shift from socialism to a so-called "social market economy." Such a reading of the situation, however, does

"If the situation deteriorates further, the regime might well create the reality it pretends to fight, as its unrestricted use of violence against civilians and manipulation of sectarian divides are likely to fuel Sunni radicalism."

not explain why the uprising has taken roots in the cities of Latakia and Banyas, on the coast, and of Homs, in the center, since these economies are much better than that of the rural hinterland. Nor does it help explain the relative calm that prevails in the countryside of Aleppo (North) and in the Jezireh (North East), where social and economic conditions are by far the worst in the country, all the more so since local agriculture has been devastated by drought since 2007.

An alternative explanation is the sectarian factor. Indeed, all of Latakia, Banyas and Homs are home to sizeable Alawite communities that have migrated from the mountains and countryside during the 20th century and live in relatively homogeneous neighborhoods. Of course, the mere presence of Alawites did not stir up Sunni resentment; rather, it could be their massive recruitment into the local security apparatus, whose corruption and voracity has increased

while the redistributive capacities of the state have diminished. Of course, the situation is no different in the north and northeast, but in those regions, in the absence of Alawites, the intelligence services have mostly recruited among (Sunni) Bedouins and Kurds, which has possibly allowed for relatively smoother relations between the population and the security apparatus.

Since the rallying to the opposition of the merchant bourgeoisie of Damascus and Aleppo does not seem plausible in the short-term, the real key to the fate of the regime is the loyalty of the countryside of the north/northeast, and more particularly of the governorate of Aleppo, which is home to 25% of the country's total population. Were the uprising to spread there, the Syrian army would be quickly overstretched, since there are good reasons to think that only a small proportion of its 300,000-strong active manpower would be as loyal against civilians as the (predominantly Alawite) 4th Brigade, which has been besieging Deraa, or the Republican Guard, which defends the capital.

The Role of the Islamists and the Prospects for Radicalization

Contrary to official allegations, Islamic forces have played a minor role so far in the Syrian protests. The exiled Society of the Muslim Brothers, which was completely eradicated inside the country following the insurgency of the early 1980s, kept a low profile for more than one month after the start of the uprising, probably to avoid feeding the regime's propaganda campaign against the domestic opposition. The Brothers nevertheless changed their mind with the conference of the Syrian opposition held in Istanbul in late April, following which they issued their first formal call to demonstrate.⁴

In Damascus, although some senior Muslim scholars initially vowed support for demonstrations, most of them have been quickly silenced through a mixture of threats and concessions such as the closure of Damascus' casino, the opening of a new institute for higher Islamic studies, the reinstatement

2 The Alawites ("supporters of Imam Ali"), also known under the (derogative) name of "Nusayris," are a Muslim sect that has been considered as "heretical" by most Sunni and (until very recently) Shi`a theologians throughout history. A downtrodden minority, they have lived in the coastal mountains of Syria for centuries. During the 1960s, Alawite officers became extremely influential within the Syrian military, to the extent that one of them, Hafiz al-Assad, became the head of the state in 1971. Upon his death in 2000, his son, Bashar al-Assad, succeeded him as president of Syria.

3 Ignace Leverrier, "Des dissensions se font jour dans le système syrien," www.syrie.blog.lemonde.fr, April 24, 2011.

4 "Communiqué of the Society of the Muslim Brothers in Syria Concerning the Assessment of our Position," www.ikhwanysyria.com, April 28, 2011.

of face-veiled teachers that had been transferred to administrative positions, and the creation of an Islamic satellite channel.⁵

Local clerics have joined the opposition and, in some cases, have become its main speakers in rebellious cities such as Deraa (imam of Grand Mosque Ahmad Sayasne and Mufti Rizq Abazayd, who resigned from his position in protest at the crackdown, then accepted to be reinstated under official pressure) and Banyas (Anas `Ayrut). This is apparently, however, not the result of any active involvement in the early stage of the protests but rather that demonstrators have put forward these well-known and respected figures.

Whereas the demands of the aforementioned clerics have remained focused on democratic reforms rather than on a specifically Islamic agenda, there were at least two substantiated cases of men of religion giving fiery sectarian speeches in front of the demonstrators. In one of them, however, the contrast between the speaker's enthusiasm at vilifying "infidels" and his refusal to call for the fall of the regime gives some credence to the theory that this established cleric was actually sent by Syrian intelligence services to undermine the credibility of the protest movement.⁶

The Syrian official press has repeatedly pointed to the killings of several dozen soldiers and policemen as proof of the involvement of Saudi-backed "extremists" in the uprising. For its part, the opposition has accused the regime of executing members of the military who refused to shoot at civilians. In fact, there is no need to resort to any of these theories to make sense of the death of security operatives. Light automatic weapons such as AK-47s are widespread in the Syrian countryside and coastal region, where they are used for hunting, protection of livestock against hyenas, and feuds. Therefore, it would not be surprising if people sought revenge for relatives killed by security forces during the recent demonstrations, all the more so that the most violent clashes

occurred in regions where tribal bonds are strong.

In addition to its ruthless character, the regime's handling of popular unrest is also distinctly sectarian, which might help jihadist groups promote their narrative among the Sunni population. As soon as the first demonstrations started in the Sunni neighborhoods of Latakia, the government labeled them as a sectarian *fitna* (discord) while *agents provocateurs* reportedly sought to create tensions between the Sunni and Alawite communities of the city. In addition to the fact that repression chiefly relies on the most loyal (predominantly Alawite) units of the army, the authorities have resorted to Alawite paramilitaries and thugs called "Shabbiha." In a video that quickly went viral on YouTube, plainclothes militiamen are seen beating trussed up prisoners in the Sunni village of al-Bayda (Banyas) while shouting to one another with distinctly Alawite names such as "Ali Abbas."⁷

At the moment, Syria does not seem to be home to organized jihadist networks that could exploit such a situation in the short-term. Throughout the 2000s, the country has exported most of its radical Islamists to Iraq and, to a lesser extent, Lebanon (such as to the group Fatah al-Islam). As a result, Syria has suffered relatively little from terrorism during the last decade; with the exception of the bombing in September 2008 that killed 17 near a center of the intelligence service in Sidi Qazzaz, a suburb of Damascus, the country witnessed only three failed (and, for two of them, somewhat curious) attacks by Islamic militants,⁸ in addition to a series of skirmishes between the latter and security forces in 2005-2006. Moreover, dozens of jihadists perished in the suppression of a riot at the prison of Seydnaya in the summer of 2008.

In late 2004, London-based Syrian jihadist scholar `Abd al-Mun`im Halima (also known as Abu Basir al-Tartusi) launched the online magazine *Risalat al-Mujahidin* (The Mujahidin's Newsletter) with the aim to encourage

fellow Islamic militants to identify Syria as a "land of jihad." With U.S. troops in Iraq, and because of Syria's anti-Western policy, the magazine failed to attract any attention, with the result that it stopped printing after a couple of issues. The current events have led al-Tartusi to focus on Syria again.⁹ With the rising number of (mostly Sunni) victims of state repression, and the active involvement in the latter of *de facto* sectarian Alawite militias, there are some reasons to fear that he might end up being more successful this time.

Conclusion

After two months of unrest and the killings of almost 1,000 people, the situation remains uncertain. Although President Bashar al-Assad has made full use of his military might, he has failed to crush the movement. At the same time, the number of demonstrators has remained limited to probably less than 50,000 nationwide, and protests have still not taken root in the central districts of Damascus and Aleppo or in the populous northern countryside. The Syrian "revolution" is thus increasingly looking like a war of attrition whose result is impossible to foresee, since neither side seems to lack determination.

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5 *Al-Watan* [Damascus], April 6, 2011.

6 Sermon of Sheikh As`ad Khalil on "Freedom Square" in Homs, April 18, 2011, available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=owu3WF4VWxE.

7 This can be viewed at www.youtube.com/watch?v=PVPDZji4-f4.

8 Against an empty UN building in April 2004, an empty building of the national television in June 2006, and the U.S. Embassy in September 2006.

9 See, for example, "Important Advices and Orientations for Demonstrators," www.abubaseer.bizland.com, April 30, 2011.

Can Al-Qa`ida Survive Bin Ladin's Death? Evaluating Leadership Decapitation

By Jenna Jordan

WHAT WILL THE death of Usama bin Ladin mean for the war on terrorism? While Bin Ladin's death was a major tactical victory for the United States, decapitation alone rarely results in the demise of terrorist organizations. Killing Bin Ladin may destabilize al-Qa`ida temporarily, but his death is unlikely to be a significant blow to the organization.

This article examines the effectiveness of leadership targeting based on a dataset compiled by the author. It shows what factors determine whether leadership decapitation will be effective, and it concludes that the death of Bin Ladin is unlikely to weaken the al-Qa`ida terrorist group.

Research on Leadership Targeting

To assess the effectiveness of leadership decapitation against terrorist groups, the author compiled a dataset of 298 incidents of leadership targeting from 1945-2004. In brief, the findings suggest that decapitation is not an effective counterterrorism strategy. In fact, the rate of decline is lower for groups whose leaders have been killed or arrested. Moreover, in certain cases decapitation can have adverse and counterproductive consequences. Decapitation is the least effective in the context of groups that are older, religious, or relatively large.¹

Comparing the rate of decline for groups that have undergone leadership decapitation to those that have not, the data shows that decapitation does not increase the likelihood of organizational collapse beyond a

baseline rate of collapse for groups over time. Organizations that have not had their leaders removed are more likely to fall apart than those that have undergone a loss of leadership. While 53% of decapitated terrorist groups fell apart, 70% of groups that have never experienced decapitation are no longer active. The marginal utility for decapitation is actually negative—the rate of collapse is almost 20% less for decapitated organizations—particularly for larger, older, religious, and separatist organizations.

There are three key variables that can help determine whether and under what conditions decapitation is likely to be effective: an organization's age, size, and type.

First, a group's age was the strongest predictor of when decapitation results in group collapse. Older groups tend to withstand attacks on their leadership, and decapitation is counterproductive the older a group becomes. This variable was coded according to the year in which the organization began conducting terrorist activity and was coded in 10-year increments. The data shows that organizations under 10 years of age were the most susceptible to collapse. Decapitation is seven percent less effective than doing nothing for groups under 20 years of age, and becomes 20% less effective for groups between 20-30 years of age. Groups that had been active for more than 40 years were always resistant to collapse following the removal of a leader. There are strong reasons to expect that larger groups possess organizational attributes, which increase their resilience to counterterrorism measures in general.

Second, large groups are better able to regroup after the removal of leaders; decapitation rarely works against groups with more than 500 members. This variable is coded according to the number of active members. The smallest organizations, those with fewer than 100 active members, were susceptible to collapse. Generally, as a group gets larger, the success rate of decapitation declines. Once a group exceeds a membership of 500, the rate of decline is higher for groups that have not experienced decapitation. Decapitation essentially becomes counterproductive. For groups with between 500-1,000

members, the rate of decline for decapitated organizations is 46% less than for non-decapitated organizations.

Third, religious and separatist groups are difficult to destabilize through leadership targeting, while ideological organizations are the most susceptible to targeting efforts.² Religious groups that have undergone decapitation are less likely to fall apart than those that did not. The rate of decline for decapitated religious groups is 15% less than for religious groups whose leaders have not been targeted, while decapitated ideological groups fall apart about seven percent less than non-decapitated ideological groups. Overall, the data shows that decapitation is not an effective strategy, and in certain cases it actually increases organizational resilience.

Organizational Resilience

To explain why small, young, and ideological groups are easier to destabilize than older, larger, and religious, the author developed a theory of organizational resilience. Organizational resilience is a function of two variables: bureaucratization and communal support. Decapitation is unlikely to result in the demise of groups that have bureaucratized administrative functions or that have high levels of communal support. Groups have an easier time regrouping after an external shock if they have bureaucratic features at the upper levels of the organization or if they have significant levels of communal support.

First, bureaucratization is an internal mechanism that increases group stability and facilitates a clear succession process. Older or larger organizations are more likely to develop bureaucratic traits including an organized administrative staff, a hierarchy of authority, and a system of rules and regulations, making it more stable and less likely to fail. As organizations grow in size

1 Jenna Jordan, "When Heads Roll: Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Decapitation," *Security Studies* 18:4 (2009). For other studies on the effectiveness of leadership decapitation, see Michael Freeman, "The Headless Horseman: A Theoretical and Strategic Assessment of Leadership Targeting," *Journal of Conflict Studies* 30 (2010); Patrick Johnston, "Assessing the Effectiveness of Leadership Decapitation in Counterinsurgency Campaigns," Harvard University, 2010; Bryan C. Price, *Removing the Devil You Know: An Empirical Analysis of Leadership Decapitation and Terrorist Group Duration* (West Point, NY: U.S. Military Academy, 2010).

2 In the dataset generated for this study, cases are coded as religious, ideological, or separatist. While religious organizations certainly have ideological aspirations, "ideological" is a category that includes Marxist, Leninist, social revolutionary, fascist, and white supremacist organizations. This is a dummy variable to allow for overlap. For example, organizations can be classified as religious/separatist, separatist/ideological, or ideological/religious.

and/or age, they often require a more complex administration to function effectively. An administrative staff, hierarchy, and stable rules can allow the group to operate efficiently and, most importantly, increase its stability and capacity to withstand leadership attacks.

Second, communal support is essential in providing the resources necessary for a terrorist group to function and survive.³ Accordingly, groups with higher levels of local support should have access to more resources, decreasing their vulnerability to destabilization. While not in all cases, religious and separatist groups often have a higher degree of support from the communities in which they operate. As religious and separatist doctrine tends to be rooted within local communities, its reproduction is not necessarily dependent upon the leader. As a result, the loss of a leader would be less disruptive to the group's doctrinal coherence. In comparison, the doctrine upon which ideological organizations are based is usually dependent upon a particular set of beliefs that is exclusive to the group or to the leader itself. Groups with higher levels of local support should thus have access to resources necessary to survive attacks.

Past Examples

Hamas

Many of the most prominent cases of leadership decapitation fit this pattern. For example, Hamas leaders have been targeted repeatedly with unsuccessful results. Hamas has had a high amount of popular support, due in part to its ability to provide social services, education, and religious institutions to the Palestinian community.⁴ Hamas' organizational structure has made it difficult to destabilize in the face of

repeated attacks on its leadership. Its bureaucratic hierarchy, combined with a largely decentralized structure of local networks, further increased its ability to withstand decapitation.⁵ While the targeting of key leaders may have decreased the lethality of Hamas' attacks, the number of operations increased over time.

Two top Hamas leaders, Shaykh Ahmad Yassin and Abdul Aziz al-Rantisi, were both targeted and killed by Israeli forces in 2004.⁶ Although the organization was temporarily disrupted, these and other past cases of targeted killings incited retaliatory attacks and outrage, ultimately increasing communal support for the organization.⁷ Civilian deaths, which can occur during the process of targeting leaders, have also fueled Palestinian support for Hamas.⁸ Eventually, public support reached such a high level that Hamas won the Palestinian legislative elections in 2006.⁹

Al-Qa`ida

Al-Qa`ida fits this pattern as well. While Bin Ladin's death may destabilize the group in the short-term, decapitation alone is not likely to result in its demise. First, al-Qa`ida formed in 1988, which makes it more than 20 years old—this should significantly increase its ability to withstand Bin Ladin's death. Decapitation is almost 20% less effective than doing nothing against groups between 21-30 years of age. Second, al-Qa`ida is clearly a religious organization—its goals include the establishment of a pan-Islamic caliphate, overthrowing non-Islamic regimes, and expelling infidels from Muslim countries—which also tends to make terrorist groups more resistant to attacks on its leadership.¹⁰ Finally,

the issue of whether al-Qa`ida's size will work in its favor is less clear-cut, since experts disagree over the group's exact numbers.¹¹ Yet it is reasonable to believe that the group has more than 500 militants—which would put it over the threshold at which terrorist organizations become better able to withstand decapitation. Even if the group has less than 500 members, the rate of decapitation success for groups with between 100 and 500 members is still very small.

Religious and separatist organizations often do not depend upon the specific ideology of the leader. While Bin Ladin has provided a key inspirational role, the organization has an ideological resonance that extends beyond the spiritual leadership he provided. Rather, Bin Ladin developed and broadened the appeal of al-Qa`ida's ideology to attract a broad base of support.¹² His anti-Western message was able to attract widespread support. Some of al-Qa`ida's prime recruiting tools this past decade have been U.S. military actions in Iraq and Afghanistan, which may continue to draw fighters to Bin Ladin's cause after his death. It is this broad ideological position that has made al-Qa`ida's support and infrastructure both global and resilient.

Bin Ladin's death may temporarily destabilize al-Qa`ida's core in Pakistan; however, its decentralized structure should increase its resilience to long-term destabilization. The organization is highly bifurcated, with local affiliates—al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP)—operating largely independently. Decentralized organizations are more difficult to destabilize through leadership attacks.¹³

3 Mia Bloom, *Dying to Kill: The Allure of Suicide Terror* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), p. 95; Audrey Kurth Cronin, *How Terrorism Ends: Understanding the Decline and Demise of Terrorist Campaigns* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), p. 104; Robert Pape, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism* (New York: Random House, 2005), p. 81; Risa Brooks, *Societies and Terrorist Violence: How Social Support Affects Militant Campaigns* (Chicago: Northwestern University, 2009).

4 Ziad Abu-Amr, "Hamas: A Historical and Political Background," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 22:4 (1993).

5 Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas: Vision Violence and Coexistence* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), p. 152.

6 In another prominent instance of decapitation, Yahya Ayyash's death in 1996 directly resulted in multiple retaliatory attacks with high casualties.

7 Khaled Hroub, "Hamas after Shaykh Yasin and Rantisi," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 33:4 (2004).

8 Ibid.; Daniel Byman, "Do Targeted Killings Work?" *Foreign Affairs* 85:2 (2006); Avery Plaw, *Targeting Terrorists* (London: Ashgate Publishing, 2008).

9 Azzam Tamini, *Hamas: A History from Within* (Ithaca, NY: Olive Branch Press, 2007), p. 18.

10 Cronin, p. 182.

11 See Peter Bergen and Katherine Tiedemann, "The Al-Manac of Al Qaeda," *Foreign Policy*, 2010; Peter Bergen and Bruce Hoffman, "Assessing the Terrorist Threat," A Report of the Bipartisan Policy Center's National Security Preparedness Group, 2010.

12 Rohan Gunaratna, *Inside Al Qaeda: Global Network of Terror* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), pp. 71-72.

13 On the stability of decentralized organizations, see Kathleen Carley, "A Theory of Group Stability," *American Sociological Review* 56:3 (1991); Kathleen Carley, Ju-Sung Lee, and David Krackhardt, "Destabilizing Networks," *Connections* 24:3 (2002).

While these affiliates initially focused on local and regional affairs, they have increased their efforts at transnational terrorist activity. AQAP allegedly helped plan the 2009 Little Rock recruitment office shooting, the 2009 attempted Christmas Day bombing of a U.S. airliner over Detroit, and the 2010 cargo planes bomb plot. Even if Bin Ladin's death significantly weakens al-Qa`ida's core, which given the data seems unlikely, the local affiliates have shown that they are committed to al-Qa`ida's larger agenda. While al-Qa`ida's core has already been significantly weakened since fleeing Afghanistan in 2001, its quasi-bureaucratic system of administration should increase its capacity to endure this latest setback. Groups can be both hierarchical at the upper levels and decentralized at the lower and more operational levels. It is the combination of these two factors that can make groups difficult to weaken.¹⁴

Conclusion

Overall, the appeal of al-Qa`ida's ideology, the growth of its decentralized networks, and the regrouping of al-Qa`ida's leadership suggest that Bin Ladin's death will not destroy the group. There is also a potential not only for decapitation to be counterproductive, but to result in adverse consequences. The killing of high-profile leaders such as Bin Ladin, who become symbols of martyrdom, can generate a desire for revenge and retaliation, resulting in more attacks.

This all indicates the importance of following up on this successful attack in ways that will decrease support for al-Qa`ida. Terrorist groups depend upon popular support to function, survive as covert organizations, and execute attacks. Support is necessary for a group to replenish its membership, raise money, provide resources, and ensure its ability to operate covertly. While the type of support that al-Qa`ida depends upon is very different from that of Hamas or Lebanese Hizb Allah, it is still important that groups have support in the areas where they operate. The more support, the easier it is for them to carry out activity. While its tactics are less popular, al-Qa`ida has managed to build a sizeable base of

support. In fact, public opinion polls in Pakistan have found that substantial minorities feel that al-Qa`ida's cause is legitimate and believe that it is seeking justice for Muslims.¹⁵ It is the ideological resonance of al-Qa`ida's doctrine that allows the group to recruit new members and can increase its ability to withstand attacks.

American leaders could help dry up this popular support for al-Qa`ida by beginning to withdraw ground forces from Afghanistan, thus neutralizing one of the causes for which Bin Ladin's militants have been fighting. While al-Qa`ida is driven by religious doctrine, the presence of U.S. ground forces in Muslim countries has been a key tool in recruitment. Much of Bin Ladin's support initially stemmed from opposition to U.S. forces in the Arabian Peninsula in the 1990s.¹⁶ The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan served to further resentment toward a U.S. military presence, incite attacks, and promote recruitment. By completing the withdrawal of troops from Iraq and removing considerable troops from Afghanistan, the United States could mitigate critical sources of support for al-Qa`ida.

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15 C. Christine Fair, Neil Malhotra, and Jacob N. Shapiro, "Islam, Militancy, and Politics in Pakistan: Insights from a National Sample," *Terrorism and Political Violence* 22:4 (2010). Also see Jacob N. Shapiro and C. Christine Fair, "Understanding Support for Islamist Militancy in Pakistan," *International Security* 34:3 (2009/2010).

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Hizb Allah's Position on the Arab Spring

By Benedetta Berti

IN JANUARY 2011, before the arrival of the wave of massive sociopolitical and geostrategic change that has spread through the Middle East, the regional balance of power began shifting in Beirut, when the Hizb Allah-led opposition forces resigned from Saad Hariri's executive cabinet, leading to the collapse of the "pro-Western" March 14 government and to the rise of a Hizb Allah-dominated parliamentary majority. In the months following its "takeover" of Lebanese domestic politics, Hizb Allah is now capitalizing on its enhanced domestic status while attempting to improve its regional standing and power. To do so, Hizb Allah has been following the Arab spring closely, while using its political and military power to support—mostly indirectly—popular revolutions in the Middle East and to increase its regional involvement.

This article explores Hizb Allah's response to the ongoing protests in the Middle East and analyzes both the group's direct and indirect support for these movements, as well as the strategic shift that took place within the Lebanese-Shi'a organization in reaction to what the group views as a favorable shift in the regional balance of power.

Embracing the Protest Movements

Hizb Allah's stance with respect to the ongoing protest movements in the Middle East has been one of unequivocal support. This should not come as a surprise. Since the end of the July 2006 war against Israel, the group has gradually shifted away from its traditionally conciliatory strategy with respect to existing Arab regimes. Instead, in the aftermath of its 2006 confrontation with Israel, Hizb Allah has been vocal in expressing its hostility with respect to the so-called "moderate Arab regimes," while advocating in favor of radical change in the region. For instance, during the September 18, 2009 al-Quds (Jerusalem) day celebrations, Hizb Allah Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah clearly stated that "we have to replace the regimes in the Arab

14 Hamas is a good example of a terrorist group that has a highly organized hierarchy and is also decentralized.

countries with other regimes that are convinced of war in order to send their armies to war.”¹ Under this predicament, regime change among “moderate” countries (including Mubarak’s Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia) is seen as an important step to strengthen what the group defines as the Iranian-led “axis of resistance.”²

Accordingly, following the outbreak of mass protests in Tunisia and Egypt, Hizb Allah has been extremely vocal in expressing its ideological support for these movements.

During his first public display of support for the Tunisian and Egyptian people on February 7, 2011, Nasrallah explained that his group’s initial silence over these movements’ achievements was a measure adopted to shield them from criticism. In fact, he argued that if Hizb Allah would have openly sided with them at an early stage, “it would have been said that the demonstrators in Tahrir Square...are motivated by cells affiliated to Hizb Allah or Hamas...or to the Iranian Revolutionary Guards.”³ Following this initial expression of solidarity and vow to “defend” the revolution and campaign in the media to ensure its popularity, Hizb Allah has maintained a high level of indirect support for the protest movements in both Tunisia and Egypt.⁴

The fall of the Egyptian regime, specifically, has been especially welcomed by Hizb Allah, which saw in the demise of Mubarak also the decline of one of the group’s main regional opponents. Defined by the organization as an Israeli and American puppet, Mubarak had been critical of the Lebanese-Shi’a group during the 2006 Lebanon war and, in the past few years, Hizb Allah has repeatedly expressed its opposition to the Egyptian regime, criticizing its relationships with Israel, its opposition to Hamas, and its role

during the 2009 Gaza War, and going as far as calling for a popular uprising against the government.⁵

In addition, the Egyptian ousting of Mubarak has another, very concrete, implication for the Lebanese group: it led to the escape of Sami Chehab (Muhammad Youssef Ahmad Mansour), the leader of the Hizb Allah-affiliated Egyptian cell who—along with 26 more alleged Hizb Allah militants—was convicted in April 2010 by the Supreme State Security Court on charges of conspiracy to perpetrate terrorist acts.⁶ On February 2, 2011, following the beginning of the popular unrest within Egypt, Chehab and the other Hizb Allah militants managed to escape from the Wadi el-Natrun prison, where they had been detained.⁷ A couple of weeks later, on February 16, 2011, Chehab was spotted during a Hizb Allah-organized demonstration in Beirut,⁸ where Nasrallah explicitly stated that “this [Egyptian] revolution was the true reason behind the liberation of brethren captive Muhammad Mansour who is participating in our celebration and whom we welcome whole-heartedly.”⁹

In the weeks following the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt, Hizb Allah continued with its line of indirect support, openly speaking in favor of the protest movements in Yemen and Libya, while investing particular efforts in supporting the popular protest movement in Bahrain.¹⁰

In the case of Bahrain, Hizb Allah immediately spoke out in indirect assistance of that country’s Shi’a population, while sharply condemning

what the group saw as “excessive” use of violence against the protestors.¹¹ Nasrallah’s accusations against Bahrain in his March 19 speech eventually led to the country to file an official protest, with Bahraini Foreign Minister Shaykh Khalid bin Hamad al-Khalifah declaring they would hold Lebanon responsible for such statements and that, if the criticism continued, it would directly affect the bilateral relations of the two countries.¹²

In addition, in the case of Bahrain, the group’s involvement could have extended beyond indirect support, into direct participation, although evidence proving this is thin. While the Bahraini government’s accusations against Hizb Allah should be taken lightly—as the Bahraini government has a direct interest in depicting the local protests as a “foreign plot”—there have been past connections between the local Shi’a community in Bahrain and the Lebanese-Shi’a militia. As a result, Hizb Allah’s involvement in Bahrain is not an entirely new phenomenon: a recently leaked U.S. diplomatic cable from 2008 already contained allegations that the country’s opposition had been receiving training from Hizb Allah.¹³ More recently, in the wake of the local protests, the Bahraini authorities arrested a number of Lebanese nationals, accusing them of being Hizb Allah militants.¹⁴ On March 30, the Bahraini foreign minister, in an interview with the Saudi newspaper *al-Hayat*, accused Hizb Allah of involvement in the local protests, stressing that the country defined the group as a “terrorist organization.”¹⁵ Hizb Allah responded to these accusations by denying any

1 “Nasrallah Commemorates Al-Quds Day,” speech transcript, September 18, 2009, translation by Mideast Wire.

2 Ibid.

3 “Speech Delivered By Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah During The Solidarity Rally With Egypt That Was Held In Ghobairy Municipality Square – Jnah,” press release, Hizb Allah, February 10, 2011.

4 Ibid.

5 Benedetta Berti, “Hizb Allah’s Domestic Containment and Regional Expansion Strategies,” *CTC Sentinel* 2:11 (2009).

6 Yasmine Saleh, “Egyptian Court Convicts 26 Men Of Hezbollah Links,” Reuters, April 28, 2010.

7 “Sami Chehab and Members of the ‘Egypt Cell’ Escape Natroun Prison,” *al-Rai al-Aam*, February 2, 2011, translation by Mideast Wire.

8 Dominic Evans, “Hezbollah Chief Threatens To Seize Control Of Galilee,” *National Post*, February 17, 2011.

9 “Speech Delivered By Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah During A Ceremony Marking The Anniversary Of The Martyr Leaders Held In Sayyed Ashuhada Compound On Wednesday February 16, 2011,” press release, Hizb Allah, February 19, 2011.

10 “Hizb Allah Condemns ‘Heinous Crimes,’” *al-Manar*, March 18, 2011.

11 “Commenting on the Bloody Repression that Targeted Protesters in Bahrain,” press release, Hizb Allah, March 17, 2011.

12 Youssef Diab, “Lebanese Officials Trying to Contain Effect of Nasrallah’s Statement,” *Asharq al-Awsat*, March 22, 2011, translation by Mideast Wire.

13 Oren Kessler, “Iran’s Opposition to Hold Mass Protest Today. Demonstrators Return to Bahrain Capital’s Central Square. Wikileaks: Bahraini Opposition Got Training From Hezbollah,” *Jerusalem Post*, February 20, 2011.

14 “Bahraini Security Arrests Hezbollah Members, Controls Turbulent Areas,” *al-Watan*, March 18, 2011; *Al-Akhabar*, March 23, 2011, translation by Mideast Wire; Sandeep Singh Grewal, “‘Hezbollah Links’ Five Arrested,” *Gulf Daily News*, March 24, 2011.

15 Raghidah Dirgham, “Interview with Bahraini Foreign Minister Shaykh Khalid Bin-Hamad Al Khalifah,” *al-Hayat*, March 30, 2011.

link or involvement, consistent with the group's strategy of rejecting accusations of any regional activism.¹⁶

The only exception to Hizb Allah's indirect and alleged direct support for the protest movement across the region has been, unsurprisingly, with respect to Syria. In the case of its traditional political ally, in fact, the group has refrained from supporting the protests, while the Hizb Allah-controlled media has been engaged in a campaign to discredit the anti-regime movement by downplaying its size, or by accusing the protesters to have been paid to take part in the anti-regime demonstrations.¹⁷ In addition, since February 2011 there have also been reports of Hizb Allah units deployed along the Lebanese-Syrian border to monitor the situation and assist Bashar al-Assad's regime.¹⁸

Hizb Allah's Strategic Realignment: Emerging as a Stronger Regional Actor?

In Hizb Allah's worldview, the ongoing protest movements, from Tunisia to Egypt to Libya, are seen as marking a watershed for the region, and the group has been trying to capitalize on the ongoing social and political unrest to strengthen its regional standing and increase its strategic alliances.

To accomplish this, the group has linked the protest movements to its own "resistance" agenda and has attempted to portray the ongoing revolutions as part of a regional realignment away from the West and closer to the Shi'a organization and its allies, especially Iran. For instance, in his February 7, 2011 speech, Nasrallah claimed that the ongoing protests represented

the revolution of the poor, the free, the freedom seekers and the rejecters of humiliation and disgrace which this [Egypt] nation was subject to due to giving up to the will of America and Israel...

It is the revolution...against...the regime's policy in the Arab-Israeli struggle.¹⁹

In addition, he compared the protest movements to "the Lebanese resistance in July War 2006 and the historic steadfastness of the Palestinian resistance during Gaza War in 2008,"²⁰ again riding the wave of regional turmoil to promote its cause.

In addition to this propaganda campaign to shape the understanding of the ongoing political unrest in a way that is favorable to the group's agenda, Hizb Allah has also been promoting the idea that—as a consequence to the regional changes—the group's strength and power have increased exponentially.

In Hizb Allah's discourse, the end of the Mubarak regime is described as tantamount to the beginning of the "ousting" of the U.S. allies from the region and to the parallel rise of the "resistance axis." In his February 16, 2011 speech, Nasrallah eloquently explained this paradigm by stating: "The major blow to the resistance... was the participation of the Egyptian regime in Camp David Agreement and consequently the emergence of Egypt from the Arab-Israeli struggle."²¹ The fall of Mubarak is then seen as marking the end of the Israeli-Egyptian detente, which will in turn change the balance of power in the Arab-Israeli conflict in favor of the "resistance." Similarly, the political unrest in the broader Middle East is also seen as a sign of the local populations embracing Hizb Allah's agenda of "resistance."

In other words, Hizb Allah believes the current regional changes are weakening Israel and the United States and strengthening itself, along with its main regional partner, Iran. As a result of this perceived geostrategic advantage, the group has been more vocal in articulating

its post-2006 military strategy with respect to Israel. This new approach, first disclosed in the aftermath of the 2006 war, is centered on strategic parity and proportional retaliation in the context of a renewed conflict with the Jewish State. Even if the shift in military doctrine is not necessarily a new element, in the aftermath of the Arab spring Hizb Allah has been more eager to publicly articulate this notion. As early as mid-February, Nasrallah stated that, in the course of the next round of confrontation with Israel, Hizb Allah would respond to territorial invasion by the Israeli Defense Forces with its own territorial invasion, by sending its units to occupy the Galilee region.²² This concept was further reiterated by Hizb Allah MP Hassan Fadlallah, who said that Hizb Allah was planning on "taking control of land in return for taking control of land,"²³ also confirming the group's renewed self-perception of power and its desire to use the regional events as a weapon in the psychological war against Israel.

Moreover, the same self-perception of strength has led the group to pursue an even more aggressive foreign policy with respect to the Arab regimes that it deems too "moderate" or hindering the formation of a regional "resistance axis." The ongoing campaign against Bahrain, for example, has to be interpreted as part of this larger anti-status quo policy. Within Lebanon, former Prime Minister Saad Hariri explained this posture by stating that Hizb Allah wants to use Lebanon as a "base to fuel internal conflicts in the Arab countries," while attempting to export the revolution "Iranian-style."²⁴ Hariri also specified that the "campaign targeting Bahrain, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and all the GCC states is—to say the least—the implementation of a foreign operations order," alluding to the strategic interest of Iran in forcing the implosion of the "moderate" Arab regimes and the regional shift toward its sphere of influence.²⁵

16 Yusuf Diyab, "Lebanon: Hezbollah Denies Training Bahrainis and Underlines its Political Support for the Opposition. Source in '14 March' Warns of Danger of its Interference in Other Countries' Affairs," *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, April 1, 2011.

17 "Lebanese Hezbollah TV Reports 'Million-Strong' Rallies Backing Syrian President," BBC Monitoring Middle East, March 30, 2011.

18 "Hizbullah Used in Syrian Security," Middle East Newsline, February 7, 2011.

19 "Speech Delivered By Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah During The Solidarity Rally With Egypt That Was Held In Ghobairi Municipality Square - Jnah."

20 Ibid.

21 "Speech Delivered By Hezbollah Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah During A Ceremony Marking The Anniversary Of The Martyr Leaders Held In Sayyed Ashuhada Compound On Wednesday February 16, 2011."

22 Evans.

23 "Resistance Setting New Equations to Protect Lebanon," *al-Manar*, February 19, 2011.

24 "Al-Hariri: Hezbollah Demanding Change, Iranian-style," March14.org, March 22, 2011, translation by Middle East Wire.

25 Ibid.

Conclusion

Hizb Allah reacted to the ongoing processes of sociopolitical and geostrategic change at the regional level by openly siding with the revolutionary protest movements. For the most part, this support has expressed itself indirectly, with the group employing its media apparatus and its grassroots network to promote the Arab revolutions. In addition, in the case of Bahrain, the open political support may have been matched by more direct involvement in the protests, allegedly through providing logistical assistance to the local protesters (although the evidence provided by the authorities in Bahrain to substantiate this claim is at the moment thin).

The reason behind the group's unequivocal standing behind the local protest movements goes well beyond ideological affinity with these movements and their agendas, or "Arab solidarity." Specifically, Hizb Allah sees the wave of regional change as a key element in shifting the regional balance of power away from the West and its local allies, and in empowering the "resistance axis." Furthermore, Hizb Allah believes that such changes are equally beneficial to the group, boosting its regional status and power, as well as its military leverage on Israel, and leading it to more openly embrace its post-2006 "tit-for-tat" military doctrine with respect to Israel.

Whether Hizb Allah is accurate in its assessment of a new era of regional alliances remains to be seen. Yet the fact that Hizb Allah currently believes it is in a position of strength domestically, regionally, and with respect to Israel will have an important impact in its future strategy and foreign policy.

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Israel, Hizb Allah, and the Shadow of Imad Mughniyyeh

By Bilal Y. Saab

IN MID-FEBRUARY 2011, the Israeli government closed temporarily four diplomatic missions abroad and put others on high alert, amid fears that Lebanese Hizb Allah may attack Israeli targets to mark the third anniversary of the killing of Imad Mughniyyeh, the Lebanese-Shi'a group's iconic military chief.¹

Since Mughniyyeh's death, Israel has accused Hizb Allah and Iran of plotting to bomb Israeli embassies abroad and trying to assassinate senior Israeli diplomats and military chiefs.² Israel has claimed publicly that its intelligence services have managed to foil several attempted terrorist operations by Hizb Allah and Iranian personnel in Eastern Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East.³ Hizb Allah has denied involvement in any of the alleged plots.

At Mughniyyeh's funeral in 2008, Hassan Nasrallah, Hizb Allah's secretary general, warned Israel that Mughniyyeh would be avenged.⁴ There is little reason to believe that Nasrallah's words are not credible or serious. In the past, Hizb Allah avenged several of its senior leaders, often in spectacular fashion. For example, Israel's February 1992 assassination of Shaykh Abbas Moussawi was followed one month later by Hizb Allah's bombing of the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires, Argentina, killing 29 people. In addition, Israel's May 1994 kidnapping of Shaykh Mustafa Dirani and bombing of a Hizb Allah training base (which killed more than 20 fighters) was followed in July by Hizb Allah's (and Iran's) Argentine Israelite Mutual Association (AMIA)

attack, also in Buenos Aires, killing 85 people.

Nasrallah's threat to avenge Mughniyyeh, while real, creates a dilemma for the group. If the militant group does follow through on its threat and conducts a spectacular terrorist operation against Israeli targets, this could cause a massive military reaction on the part of Israel and possibly ignite war between the two belligerents. If Hizb Allah decides not to retaliate, its credibility and tit-for-tat approach could be severely damaged, which could undermine its military strategy toward Israel in the event of war or another similar situation in the future.

It is not at all clear which path Hizb Allah will choose. It is possible that Hizb Allah has already made a strategic decision to avenge Mughniyyeh; therefore, the only uncertain variables are the timing, location, and lethality of the operation. Yet it is also accurate to say that Hizb Allah does not want to risk another large-scale military confrontation with Israel given the significant material losses it suffered following the summer 2006 war.

A closer look at the life story of Mughniyyeh and an assessment of his value to Hizb Allah could help shed more light on Hizb Allah's cost-benefit calculations with regard to a potential revenge operation against Israel. Aided by extensive interviews conducted by the author with several members of Hizb Allah and Mughniyyeh's own family during the past two years, this article offers a detailed, though not definitive, profile of Mughniyyeh, revealing new information about his life, beliefs, and career as a leading member of Hizb Allah. Emphasis is intentionally placed on aspects of Mughniyyeh's life that few observers, specialists, and practitioners have known about, including his early beginnings, his ideological influences, and perhaps most important his strong ties to the Palestinians.

A more comprehensive profile of the man who managed to elude some of the world's most competent intelligence services is still relevant three years after his death because of the lasting impact he will probably have on Hizb Allah. Indeed, Mughniyyeh was anything but an ordinary member of

1 "Terror Threat: Number of Israeli Embassies Closed," YNet, February 15, 2011.

2 Yaakov Lappin, "Hezbollah Terror Attack on Israelis Abroad 'is imminent,'" *Jerusalem Post*, April 21, 2011; Sebastian Rotella, "Azerbaijan Seen as New Front in Middle East Conflict," *Los Angeles Times*, May 30, 2009.

3 "Tel Aviv Accuses Hezbollah of Plotting Attacks Against Israeli Targets in South America," *Yedioth Ahrenoth*, August 13, 2009.

4 "Hezbollah Warns Israel it Will Avenge Slain Commander," Reuters, February 16, 2011.

Hizb Allah. In fact, after Nasrallah, he might be the most influential yet least acknowledged leader of the group to date. His mindset, work ethic, unconventional strategies, and overall behavior have profoundly influenced the thinking of Hizb Allah's leaders and future generations of the Shi'a group.

The Secret Guardian of the Resistance

In the murky world of intelligence and counterintelligence, few characters have elicited more awe and bewilderment than Imad Mughniyyeh. More than three years have passed since Mughniyyeh's February 12, 2008 assassination in Damascus (most likely at the hands of Israel's Mossad), yet his life story and death continue to be shrouded in mystery.⁵

A shadowy figure, Mughniyyeh avoided publicity. Keeping a low-profile was as crucial to his work as conducting military operations or training Palestinian and Lebanese fighters. Indeed, Mughniyyeh was very secretive, even to his own Hizb Allah colleagues, who often complained to their superiors about the special status and flexibility he enjoyed. He only worked with people who he fully trusted (mostly from his own family and inner circle). He was a major part of Hizb Allah's military and paramilitary apparatus, having created and developed it since its beginnings in the late 1970s and early 1980s, but he was not bound by hierarchy or organizational rules. In a sense, he was larger than Hizb Allah, an independent operator who had one foot inside Hizb Allah and another in Tehran.

Mughniyyeh's Religious Upbringing

Based on interviews with members of Mughniyyeh's family in southern Beirut in the summers of 2009 and 2010, Imad was born on January 25, 1962 in the poor neighborhood of al-Jiwar in the district of al-Shiyah, located in the southern suburbs of Beirut. His family is from the small southern town of Tayr Dibba. Mughniyyeh went to elementary and preparatory school in al-Jiwar and lived with his father Fayez and mother Amina Salamah at home until the age of 14.

Mughniyyeh was a religious person at an early age.⁶ As a teenager, he would spend most of his time in the evenings in the Sheikh al-Kobeissi mosque near their house. When he turned 13, he planned to travel to Iraq to delve deeper into his spirituality at Najaf.⁷

The onset of the Lebanese civil war (1975-1990) forced Mughniyyeh to change his travel plans to Iraq and stay in Beirut instead. The harsh realities of sectarian conflict in Lebanon forced him to become a militiaman at the age of 14. At first, he mingled with several leftist ideological movements, from the Syrian social nationalists to the communists, and from several Lebanese militias

“In the murky world of intelligence and counterintelligence, few characters have elicited more awe and bewilderment than Imad Mughniyyeh.”

under the umbrella of the “National Front” to the Palestinians who at the time had a sizeable military presence in Lebanon. His role as a young militiaman was initially limited to stuffing sandbags to protect party members from snipers and to night shifts to guard his neighborhood. Despite his interest in and close contacts with these Lebanese parties, Mughniyyeh felt alienated and unwilling to join any of them.

In 1985, tragedy struck Mughniyyeh's family. Mughniyyeh's younger brother, Jihad, was killed by a heavy bombardment that targeted Lebanese-Shi'a spiritual leader Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah

in the district of Bir al-Abed. In 1994, Imad lost his other brother Fouad, a member of the “Lebanese resistance” against the then-Israeli occupation, who was assassinated, allegedly by the Israeli intelligence services, in the area of al-Sfeir in the southern suburbs of Beirut.

The loss of his two brothers in a short time frame had a profound impact on Mughniyyeh. It solidified his faith and consumed his intellect and worldview. Politically, solitude made him more focused and attentive to the needs of the Palestinian resistance movement. His strong interest in the political thinking and activism of Lebanese-Shi'a leader Imam Mussa al-Sadr notwithstanding, Mughniyyeh was equally fascinated by the revolutionary ideas of the Palestinians and their biggest party, Fatah. He had the opportunity to undergo military training at several Palestinian refugee camps in Beirut and outside Lebanon.⁸ His most intensive coaching took place in the camp of Abou Louay, where the famous Palestinian female fighter and “martyr” Dalal al-Maghribi trained and planned operations against Israel.⁹

Mughniyyeh's Relationship with the Palestinians

Mughniyyeh's relationship with Fatah ran deep. He began as the deputy of Abu Hassan Salameh, the famous Palestinian military commander who was responsible for countless operations against Israeli forces.¹⁰ Yet despite his close relations with Fatah's leaders, Mughniyyeh did not last long with the movement. Some Palestinians saw him as a rebel, a loner who was not comfortable following orders or working within tight-knit organizational structures.

6 Even though Mughniyyeh was devout, he was fascinated by the atheist ideology of Leon Trotsky. He was eccentric, a dreamer who would read a lot and listen to the music of revolutionary singer and songwriter Marcel Khalifeh. A short, handsome boy, he had a noticeable soft side. Yet he also had a passion for history and the military sciences and an obsession with strategy and issues of war. Carl von Clausewitz was his favorite military historian.

7 Najaf is a major center of Islamic theological teaching (al-Hawza) for Shi'a and the site of the shrine of Imam Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of Prophet Muhammad.

8 Personal interview, Ali Shibani, Hizb Allah member, southern Beirut, Lebanon, August 28, 2010.

9 Ibid.

10 Abu Hassan Salameh was a trusted lieutenant of and potential successor to Yasser Arafat, head of the Palestine Liberation Organization. As chief planner for the terrorist organization Black September, Abu Hassan was behind the raid at the 1972 Munich Olympic Games in which 11 Israeli athletes were killed, and a wide assortment of other terrorist attacks and murders. He was killed by the Mossad in Beirut in 1979. See “Death of a Terrorist,” *Time Magazine*, February 5, 1979.

5 He was killed by a bomb placed in his car seat.

Furthermore, Mughniyyeh was far more religiously inspired than his fellow Palestinian comrades. When Mughniyyeh heard the news of an attempted kidnapping operation of Grand Ayatollah Muhammad Hussein Fadlallah, he returned to the Lebanese-Shi'a cleric's neighborhood and decided to serve with his friends as his personal bodyguards.¹¹ In 1980, he traveled with Fadlallah to Mecca for pilgrimage and since then Mughniyyeh was known as Hajj Imad.¹²

The assassination of Iraqi religious leader Muhammad Baqer al-Sadr in Iraq in April 1980 was another turning point in Mughniyyeh's life. He found himself at war with the secular Ba'athist regime of Saddam Hussein who he accused of systematically eliminating all Shi'a leaders in Iraq. Because of Fatah's links to the Ba'athists at the time, Mughniyyeh decided to completely sever his relationship with the Palestinian movement in mid-1981.¹³

When Israeli forces invaded Lebanon in 1982, Mughniyyeh was on his way to visit the holy places in Iran. Soon after he heard the news, he returned to Syria and from there to Lebanon. On his way home, he was kidnapped by the Christian rightist Lebanese party, the Phalanges (Kataeb), but was released after political intervention by Lebanese-Shi'a leaders and entered Beirut where he rejoined ranks with his former Palestinian friends.¹⁴ Throughout his military encounters with the Palestinian factions, Mughniyyeh learned of the locations of several heavy arms depots. With his close Lebanese inner circle, he formed an elite force that was later to be called the "Islamic Resistance."¹⁵ The force had fighters in Beirut, the western Bekaa, and the south. They waged sophisticated military operations, set ambushes and created sniper units against the Israeli occupying forces.

Their most successful operation was on November 11, 1982, when "martyr" Ahmad Kassir conducted a suicide operation against an Israeli military base in Tyre/Sour, destroying it and causing heavy casualties.¹⁶

Given his links to the Palestinians,¹⁷ Mughniyyeh had little difficulty managing the relationship and steering it in ways that were most effective in the fight against Israel. He led several Lebanese-Palestinian military operations against Israel and trained and armed many Palestinian fighters and offered them logistical support. In 1984, Abu Hassan Salameh, Mughniyyeh's old companion and former boss, parted ways with Fatah and joined the Islamic Resistance, where he became Mughniyyeh's right-hand man.¹⁸

Mughniyyeh was proud of the close links he and his colleagues in the Islamic Resistance developed with Palestinian groups inside the occupied territories. He always spoke highly of the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, saying that "the leftist and secular elements in Palestine were the first to work with us. But now we have a strategic alliance with Hamas and Islamic Jihad."¹⁹ He added:

we in Hizb Allah did not accept that a movement in Palestine would form and have allegiance to us organizationally, administratively, or even religiously. Those who became Shi'a tried hard to convince us to create a Hizb Allah branch in Palestine, but we rejected the idea because we found in the resistance not just a choice for liberation but also a place to counter sectarian

divides (*fitna*), where all are united to fight the occupation.²⁰

Mughniyyeh had a special relationship with the leaders of Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ). He was determined to provide financial and media support (through Hizb Allah's satellite television station al-Manar and radio station al-Nour) to the Palestinian intifada. He established a bond with the late Dr. Fathi al-Shikaki, the former secretary general of PIJ and also his successor, Dr. Ramadan Abdullah Shalah. Contacts among Mughniyyeh, Hamas and PIJ were so close that few inside Hizb Allah knew that moments before he was assassinated in Damascus in February 2008, he was purportedly in a meeting with Hamas leader Khaled Meshal and other Palestinian militants.²¹

With the help of Syria and Iran, Mughniyyeh was also in charge of transferring fighters and cadres from inside Palestine to Syria, Lebanon, and Iran to undergo military training.²² His main preoccupation was the Palestinian youth and how to train them to become fighters against the Israeli occupation. Through his contacts, he would send directions on how to form elite and specialized units inside Palestine including infantry, engineering squads, snipers, and missile, anti-tank, and guerrilla units. Mughniyyeh was so hands-on in the Palestinian theater that when the Gaza war broke out in 2008, one senior commander in the Izz al-Din al-Qassam Brigades said that they felt Mughniyyeh was among them as a partner in the battles.²³ When Palestinian militants were caught by the Israelis, Mughniyyeh would help release them by kidnapping soldiers along the Lebanese-Israeli border.²⁴ This was in large part seen by him as repaying his Palestinian friends in Lebanon who had helped him create Islamic Resistance.

11 Personal interview, Ibrahim al-Amin, chief editor, *al-Akhbar* newspaper, Beirut, Lebanon, July 12, 2010.

12 Ibid. Hajj is a title preserved for Muslims who go on a pilgrimage to Mecca.

13 Personal interview, Ibrahim al-Amin, chief editor, *al-Akhbar* newspaper, Beirut, Lebanon, July 12, 2010.

14 Personal interview, Ibrahim Bayram, Hizb Allah insider and *Annahar* newspaper columnist, Beirut, Lebanon, July 11, 2010.

15 Ibid.

16 Naim Qassem, *Hizbullah: The Story from Within* (London: Saqi, 2005), p. 49.

17 Although he tried to distance himself from the Palestinians due to their divisions, links with the Ba'athists, disorganization, and different belief systems, Mughniyyeh still had great sympathy for their cause. As many Palestinian leaders and fighters were forced by Israel to leave Lebanon and go to Tunisia, Yemen, and Sudan, Mughniyyeh stepped in to unite the remaining few and encourage them to join the collective fight against the Israeli army.

18 Personal interview, Ala'a Musulmani, Hizb Allah member, Beirut, Lebanon, July 14, 2009.

19 Quote taken from Ibrahim al-Amin, "The Charmer of the Resistance," *al-Akhbar*, February 12, 2010.

20 Ibid.

21 Personal interview, Ibrahim Bayram, Hizb Allah insider and *Annahar* newspaper columnist, Beirut, Lebanon, July 11, 2010.

22 Personal interview, Ibrahim al-Amin, chief editor, *al-Akhbar* newspaper, Beirut, Lebanon, July 12, 2010.

23 Al-Amin, "The Charmer of the Resistance."

24 Personal interview, Mohammad Tihfe, Hizb Allah member, southern Lebanon, July 21, 2010.

Within the Palestinian resistance movement, Yasser Arafat, its late chairman, had great admiration for the intelligent and determined Mughniyyeh.²⁵ He always made sure to keep close contact with Mughniyyeh, despite the religious differences between the two. He often wrote letters to Mughniyyeh with the introduction "Dear Son."²⁶

Mughniyyeh's Accomplishments and Core Beliefs

For Mughniyyeh, the goal of his Islamic Resistance was clear: to eliminate Israel. He once told a visitor of his that

there is no debate or compromise, and we are not concerned with any decision by anyone in the world to grant Israel the right to exist. We are not talking about something unrealistic. Along with our religious convictions, we have plenty of rational reasons which further our belief that Israel's eradication will depend on what we do, the people of Palestine inside and outside, in their Arabic and Islamic environment.²⁷

Mughniyyeh had a strategic plan after the liberation of southern Lebanon in May 2000. He told the same visitor:

After the liberation in 2000, and when we got to learn more about the enemy and his capabilities, the dream of liberating Palestine became achievable. We formed a committee tasked with the elimination of Israel. In the Islamic Resistance, there is a special unit for Palestine. We do not work on behalf of the Palestinians, and we will never do that. But we are in a political, moral, and religious position that requires us not only to help them stay alive where they are, but also to resist the occupation and force the Israelis to withdraw, even if on a gradual basis.²⁸

25 Arafat could see Mughniyyeh's unique potential and his ability to unite the Palestinian-Lebanese resistance fronts against Israel. He also knew about Mughniyyeh's solid operational relationship with the Iranians and the Syrians, which made the establishment of close contact with him even more important.

26 Al-Amin, "The Charmer of the Resistance."

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid.

Mughniyyeh did not distinguish one resistance fighter from another. He did not believe in any political or logistical constraints when it came to fighting the Israeli occupation in Palestine. The fight was one, be it in Lebanon or Palestine. For a Lebanese national, Palestine was his *raison d'être*. Everything began and ended in Palestine.²⁹

No one inside Hizb Allah, not even Nasrallah, had a more instrumental role than Mughniyyeh in building the relationship with Iran and taking it to new heights. Soon after the Islamic revolution in 1979, Mughniyyeh traveled to Tehran and began to form extensive links with senior Iranian clergy and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). He also built a military academy inside Hizb Allah that has become a military institute.³⁰

His partnership with the Syrians continued to be marred with mistrust. Yet he saw no alternative. He, just like all Hizb Allah leaders before and after him, understood that while Iran was the godfather of the group, related to it by religion and ideology, Syria was the necessary link, the weapons and logistical facilitator that made the fight against Israel possible. Mughniyyeh's mistrust of Syria was justified. After all, it was on Syrian territory that he was killed, prompting many analysts to speculate whether his death occurred with the knowledge or even facilitation of the Syrian intelligence services.

Insights on Hizb Allah for the Future

Given the leadership role Mughniyyeh played inside Hizb Allah for more than 15 years, it is reasonable to draw inferences from his thinking and activities about Hizb Allah overall.

1. *Hizb Allah has relatively low trust in Syria.* Hizb Allah's strategic alliance with Syria has endured primarily because both parties continue to have an interest in standing up to Israel and regaining lost territory and rights which they feel Israel has usurped.³¹ Yet it is widely

assumed that in the event that Syria regains the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights and consequently terminates its state of conflict with Israel (and manages to reinstitute direct control over Lebanon), Damascus' military relationship with Hizb Allah is likely to end. Hizb Allah is acutely aware of that potential scenario and has most likely worked on contingency plans with Iran. The group has no interest in going back to the days when Syria was militarily present in Lebanon (1990-2005) and in charge of its military actions and daily political affairs.

Also affecting the durability and nature of the long-term relationship between Syria and Hizb Allah is the very survival of the al-Assad regime. If the regime collapses and a more democratic government replaces it, it is possible, though not inevitable, that the new leadership in Damascus will have less cooperative relations with Hizb Allah and focus on more urgent domestic priorities instead. It is unclear whether the al-Assad regime will survive the ongoing popular uprising or how exactly a potential Syrian-Israeli peace agreement would affect Hizb Allah's future and staying power.

2) *Hizb Allah's organizational structure is hierarchical but also flexible.* Open source information on Hizb Allah's organizational structure is accessible, yet more detailed information on its military apparatus is much harder to find and what is available is less than reliable.³² Unlike other social

often witnessed tensions in the 1980s between Iran and Syria on the one hand, and armed confrontations between Syria and Hizb Allah on the other. In short, Hizb Allah is related to Iran in ways it can never be to Syria—through shared culture, ideology, and religion. Syria is far more pragmatic in foreign policy than Hizb Allah and Iran given that its leadership has fewer, if any, idiosyncratic characteristics that could prevent it from making deals with Israel and the West (Syrian policy prior and during the 1991 Gulf War is one example).

32 Hizb Allah's organizational structure is complex and highly compartmentalized, with several units and departments and much functional differentiation. At the head of the pyramid is the secretary general, currently Hassan Nasrallah, but he operates within a seven-member consultative council—the group's highest body. Perhaps the most important aspect about Hizb Allah's organizational structure is that it is hierarchical. Yet that does not mean that Nasrallah is involved in every aspect of decision-making or in all the details of military planning

29 Personal interview, Makram Jaafar, Hizb Allah member, Beirut, Lebanon, June 14, 2010.

30 Personal interview, Ali Fayad, Hizb Allah member and al-Manar satellite television producer, Beirut, Lebanon, June 13, 2010.

31 The triangular relationship between Syria, Iran, and Hizb Allah has not been easy or without fault lines; it

movements, Hizb Allah's ability to keep its secrets has been remarkable and since its creation there have been no defections (that are publicly known) from the group's military and paramilitary wings. The result is that little is known on how Hizb Allah conducts its military and clandestine affairs.

Mughniyyeh's life story suggests that when an exceptional military commander or operative comes along, he is given much operational independence, on the condition that he undergo proper indoctrination and develop close relations and maintain coordination with Iranian and Syrian personnel. Whether Hizb Allah has decided to institutionalize Mughniyyeh's special role is unclear but it is assumed that given the instrumental role he played throughout his career and the benefits he accrued to the organization, Hizb Allah would have an interest in retaining that multidimensional capacity in its skills repertoire. Some news reports have suggested that Hizb Allah has already found a replacement for Mughniyyeh, although his identity and skill-set are, unsurprisingly, still unknown.

3) *Hizb Allah is actively and unchangingly committed to the Palestinian cause.* Since its creation, Hizb Allah has had a keen eye on developments in the Palestinian Territories (even during times when Israel was occupying Lebanese territory), speaking against the Israeli occupation and often offering material and non-material support to armed Palestinian groups in the West Bank and Gaza.

Mughniyyeh was devoted to developing the military and paramilitary wings of Hizb Allah to more effectively fight the Israelis, but he was equally determined to help his Palestinian contacts wage their armed struggle against Israel. If his beliefs and career are any indication, Hizb Allah, as a movement, is also committed to unite the Palestinian

and implementation. He is more like a master coordinator and strategic communicator, working closely with his consultative council, his personal advisers, and the leadership in Tehran and Damascus. An imperfect analogy is the U.S. director of national intelligence, whose primary role is to coordinate the affairs of the U.S. intelligence community (and not so much to get involved in the CIA's and other spy agencies' operational planning and implementation).

and Lebanese fronts against Israel. Of course, given the ambitious and perhaps unrealistic nature of Hizb Allah's strategic goal, it is not likely to cause much anxiety in Tel Aviv, radically change Israeli threat perceptions, or force serious reallocation of military resources. Hizb Allah's objectives, while real, face obvious organizational and technical limitations, political challenges and realities, and Israel's own, so far successful, efforts to counter them. Yet that could change if political and military circumstances in the Middle East become more favorable, including, among other developments, the emergence of a more pro-Palestinian leadership in Cairo.

Revenge, but on Hizb Allah's Own Terms

A successful and spectacular revenge operation by Hizb Allah against Israel is an immediate trigger and flashpoint for a return to arms between the two belligerents. The next war, according to Hizb Allah, will make the previous conflict look like a "walk in the park."³³ Israel knows that Hizb Allah will not forget Mughniyyeh, or for that matter any of its fallen "martyrs." Instead, Hizb Allah honors their memory when it sees fit as it has done so in the past.

Hizb Allah is likely to be prudent, however, with the timing, target, and techniques it might use. It is expected that it will wait for the moment when Israel is vulnerable and caught sleeping. Most important, Hizb Allah is likely to conduct its operation at a time when Israel will not be in a position to retaliate with massive force. Hizb Allah's goal is assumed to be limited: to hurt Israel and restore some level of deterrence. Should war happen, however, the organization says it will be ready for it.

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33 Interview by Nicholas Blanford with Hizb Allah commanders, the content of which was revealed to this author in person during a conference in Virginia in summer 2010.

The Taliban's Conduct of Intelligence and Counterintelligence

By Ben Brandt

THROUGHOUT THE HISTORY of the post-9/11 insurgency in Afghanistan, reports have emphasized the Afghan Taliban's impressive ability to collect and exploit intelligence effectively. Researchers and media outlets describe the Afghan Taliban as possessing an "impressive intelligence network"¹ which conducts numerous functions such as giving Taliban fighters early warning of U.S. or International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) patrols, or providing U.S. forces with misleading information.² U.S. and ISAF soldiers have been consistently quoted regarding the efficacy of Taliban intelligence operations, stating that "the enemy intelligence network is on top of every move we make," "there is always someone who can be listening to what we are saying," and that the group has sources "in many places."³ A striking example of the Taliban's intelligence collection capability occurred last year, when UK Prime Minister David Cameron was forced to cancel plans to visit a military outpost in Helmand Province after intercepts indicated that the Taliban was aware of his itinerary.⁴

Given the efficacy of the insurgents' intelligence operations, detailed analysis of the history, scope, and structure of the Taliban's intelligence function is crucial for successful counterinsurgency operations, as is an understanding of the collection and counterintelligence tactics it employs, and the aims which it seeks to achieve by the use of intelligence.

1 Gilles Dorronsoro, "The Taliban's Winning Strategy," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2009.

2 C.J. Chivers, "In Eastern Afghanistan, at War with the Taliban's Shadowy Rule," *New York Times*, February 6, 2011.

3 James Astill, "Taliban Spies Keep Strong Grip on South," *Guardian*, December 11, 2003; Bill Graveland, "Troops Told Loose Lips Can Kill, Taliban Spies Everywhere," *The Canadian Press*, 2008; Tim Shipman, "Taliban Have Spies Everywhere," *Daily Mail*, August 27, 2010.

4 Matthew Green, "More on the Taliban Plot to Kill Cameron," *Financial Times*, June 10, 2010.

Taliban Intelligence Operations Prior to 9/11

Media and government accounts indicate that the Taliban possessed a massive and effective, if somewhat fractious, intelligence apparatus prior to 9/11. It operated in both Afghanistan and Pakistan and was responsible for gathering information on opponents to the regime, as well as covert actions such as bribing Northern Alliance commanders to switch sides and conducting assassinations.⁵ Taliban intelligence officials maintained extensive ties with Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI),⁶ as well as with members of the Pakistani political party Jamiat-i-Ulama-i-Islam (JUI)⁷ and foreign terrorists. Evidence presented at the administrative review board of former Taliban Deputy Intelligence Minister Abdul Haq Wasiq, who is currently imprisoned in Guantanamo Bay, described Wasiq as having "arranged to have an Egyptian Al Qaida member, Hamza Zobir, teach Taliban intelligence officers about intelligence work."⁸

Accounts of the Taliban's pre-9/11 intelligence infrastructure indicate that in addition to the Ministry of Intelligence, the Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice was an important collector of intelligence,⁹ with the two ministries sharing information on an informal basis.¹⁰ Contemporary accounts suggest that

the Ministry of Intelligence possessed some 20,000 spies and 100,000 informants in 2001, with children or former KHAD agents constituting many of its informants.¹¹ Informants were reportedly recruited on every city block to monitor neighborhoods, while foreign journalists were closely monitored.¹² The Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice reportedly supplemented this with informants in ministries, hospitals, aid agencies, and military units.¹³ The Ministry of Intelligence was notorious for detaining suspected spies and Northern Alliance personnel, and using torture tactics such as electric shocks and beatings during interrogations.¹⁴

The leadership of the Taliban's intelligence ministry appears to have changed frequently, likely due to Mullah Omar's commonly described predilection for reshuffling ministerial portfolios.¹⁵ Mullah Khaksar Akhund was described as having been the head of intelligence prior to September 1996,¹⁶ Khairullah Khairkhwa was described by the U.S. State Department as the Taliban's minister for intelligence in late 1997,¹⁷ and Mullah Hamdullah was listed as intelligence minister in 1998.¹⁸ Qari Ahmadullah, who was later killed in a U.S. airstrike, was the Taliban's minister for intelligence when 9/11 and Operation Enduring Freedom occurred.¹⁹ Maulawi Mohammad Wali,

reportedly a close ally of Mullah Omar, appears to have retained control of the Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice from 1998-2001.²⁰ The Taliban enjoyed a number of significant intelligence successes, such as the capture and execution of Pashtun opposition leader Abdul Haq,²¹ and the possible uncovering of a U.S. plot to assassinate Usama bin Ladin.²² At the same time, Taliban intelligence suffered setbacks such as the escape of imprisoned Northern Alliance leader Ismail Khan in 1999,²³ and the failure to detect a former intelligence chief who defected to the Northern Alliance in late 2001 after maintaining a secret dialogue with Ahmad Shah Massoud for several years.²⁴

Taliban Intelligence Operations Post-9/11

Operation Enduring Freedom had a major impact on the Taliban's intelligence services, with numerous key leaders such as Khairullah Khairkhwa, Qari Ahmadullah, and Ahmadullah's deputy Abdul Haq Wasiq captured or killed by U.S. and Afghan forces.²⁵ At least some Taliban intelligence personnel, however, managed to evade capture or death, and appear to have assisted in the formation of insurgent efforts.²⁶ In addition, the ISI provided significant support for fleeing Taliban members (Ahmed Rashid has described how ISI officials "waved" fleeing Taliban fighters across border checkpoints into Pakistan and helped facilitate Mullah Omar's arrival in Quetta),²⁷ and lingering

5 "Report on Fact-Finding Mission to Pakistan to Consider the Security and Human Rights Situation in Afghanistan," Danish Immigration Service, November 1, 2001; "Taliban Intelligence Chief Killed in US Bombing: Afghan Officials," Agence France-Presse, January 2, 2002.

6 Ibid.; B. Raman, "Buddha, Taliban & Gen. Musharraf," South Asia Analysis Group, June 3, 2001. Raman, a former head of the Indian intelligence agency Research and Analysis Wing, described Taliban intelligence as being "run" by ISI officers. Other reports indicate that Pakistani intelligence officers were heavily involved in training their Taliban counterparts.

7 Mashal Lutfullah, "Al Qaida Planning Next Phase," *Christian Science Monitor*, December 28, 2001.

8 Summarized transcripts from Abdul Haq Wasiq's administrative review board, July 18, 2005.

9 Ahmed Rashid, *Taliban* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2001). Rashid described the Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice as the Taliban's most effective intelligence agency.

10 "Report on Fact-Finding Mission to Pakistan to Consider the Security and Human Rights Situation in Afghanistan."

11 Julian West, "Child-Spy Network a Key Weapon in Intelligence War," *Telegraph*, October 31, 2001. The Taliban's use of children to conduct espionage continues in the post-9/11 era as well. For details, see Alex Crawford, "Ruthless Taliban Using Children As Spies," Sky News, October 17, 2010.

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

14 "Taliban Intelligence Head Reported Killed in U.S. Bombing," CNN, January 2, 2002.

15 "Afghanistan: The Taliban's Decision-Making Process and Leadership Structure," U.S. Embassy Islamabad, December 31, 1998.

16 "Biographical Data on Mullah (Omar) and the Council of Ministers," U.S. Department of Defense, November 2001.

17 "Afghanistan: Taliban Decision-Making and Leadership Structure," U.S. Embassy Islamabad, December 30, 1997.

18 "Afghanistan: The Taliban's Decision-Making Process and Leadership Structure," U.S. Embassy Islamabad, December 31, 1998.

19 "Taliban Intelligence Chief Killed in US Bombing: Afghan Officials," Agence France-Presse, January 2, 2002.

20 "Terrorism Finance: Updating the Taliban Names Designated under UNSCR 1267," U.S. SecState Cable, May 2002.

21 Rahimullah Yusufzai and Tim McGirk, "Taliban Spies: In The Cross Hairs," *Time*, November 12, 2001.

22 Lawrence Wright, *The Looming Tower* (New York: Knopf, 2006).

23 Khan was assisted in his escape by a Taliban intelligence officer. See Carlotta Gall, "A Nation Challenged: Warlords," *New York Times*, January 27, 2002.

24 Peter Baker, "Bin Laden Reportedly Used Cash to Curry Taliban Favor," *Washington Post*, November 30, 2001.

25 According to his own account, Ahmadullah had been tasked by Mullah Omar with organizing a guerrilla effort prior to his death. See Mashal Lutfullah, "Al Qaida Planning Next Phase," *Christian Science Monitor*, December 28, 2001.

26 "Taliban Names Anti-U.S. Leadership Council," Reuters, June 24, 2003; Representative Robert E. Andrews, "Message of the Day," May 6, 2002.

27 Tim McGirk, "Rogues No More?" *Time*, April 29,

pro-Taliban sympathies coupled with grievances against U.S. and ISAF forces helped the Taliban quickly reactivate formidable intelligence networks in southern provinces such as Helmand, and commence plotting attacks.²⁸

Military authors have described the Taliban's current intelligence gathering structure as being one where local Taliban units collect intelligence and share it with neighboring units and the Taliban's "higher hierarchy," which provides top-down intelligence support as well.²⁹ At the same time, a recent article in the *Los Angeles Times* argued that the Taliban's decentralized structure makes it difficult for the group to collate and effectively analyze the information gathered; if so, increased U.S. and ISAF efforts against the Taliban's field commanders are likely to have exacerbated this weakness.³⁰ In addition to collection efforts by local Taliban units and other personnel who conduct intelligence collection alongside alternative roles,³¹ the Taliban possess dedicated intelligence officers.³² These are deployed to at least the regional and provincial levels, and presumably help facilitate the flow of information and run informant networks.³³ At least

one Western official has stated that the Afghan Taliban have a de facto head of intelligence, although the identity of this individual remains unclear.³⁴ With this in mind, it is reasonable to speculate that Hafiz Abdul Majeed, a member of the Quetta *shura* with significant intelligence experience, continues to oversee Taliban intelligence efforts to some extent.³⁵

The Taliban continue to utilize a wide variety of largely human intelligence and open source intelligence based collection methods, with the group's signals intelligence capability stunted by an inability to listen in on the heavily encrypted radio transmissions of U.S. troops.³⁶ As during the pre-9/11 era, village and neighborhood level intelligence networks continue to provide the Taliban with a large quantity of information on U.S. and ISAF movements³⁷ and potential spies or government collaborators,³⁸ as well as providing a population control function: fear of the Taliban's purportedly omnipresent spies is a major factor in many Afghans' decision to obey the Taliban's edicts and avoid assisting counterinsurgency efforts.³⁹ Taliban intelligence efforts focus heavily on Afghan government employees (such as police) and Afghans working for foreign militaries (such as interpreters), who are monitored while entering or departing foreign military bases, and later targeted for

intimidation or murder.⁴⁰ As noted in many media outlets, the Taliban derive actionable intelligence from informants within military bases, prisons, and in the Afghan security forces, including those hired by military contractors; these have been used to identify informants,⁴¹ provide intelligence on military movements and facilities of interest to the Taliban,⁴² and intimidate or coerce other Afghan personnel.⁴³ The Haqqani network is believed to possess high-ranking informants within Afghan security forces as well.⁴⁴ Given a recent spate of attacks against security facilities and the reported collusion of guards in a recent mass escape of Taliban prisoners from a facility in Kandahar city, it is possible that Taliban informants are used to help facilitate direct action as well.⁴⁵

Taliban informants appear to be motivated by multiple factors, including ideological fervor and financial inducements.⁴⁶ It is unclear where the Taliban's dedicated intelligence personnel receive their training, although it is possible that the ISI continues to train some individuals. It should be noted as well that the Afghan Taliban and its close ally the Haqqani network likely obtain

2002; Ahmed Rashid, *Descent into Chaos: The United States and the Failure of Nation Building in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia* (New York: Viking Press, 2008).

28 James Astill, "Taliban Spies Keep Strong Grip on South," *Guardian*, December 11, 2003; "Car Blast Kills 4 Near U.S. Afghan Airfield," *Washington Post*, April 14, 2003.

29 Shahid Afsar, Chris Samples and Thomas Wood, "The Taliban: An Organizational Analysis," *Military Review*, May-June 2008.

30 Borzou Daragahi, "Afghan Taliban Intelligence Network Embraces the New," *Los Angeles Times*, April 13, 2011.

31 Dexter Filkins, "Karzai is Said to Doubt West Can Defeat Taliban," *New York Times*, June 11, 2010; "Taliban Member Responsible for Selecting Suicide-Bomb Sites Targeted," ISAF, December 29, 2010.

32 Sami Yousafzai and Ron Moreau, "The Dirty Dozen," *Newsweek*, April 10, 2011. Additionally, Amrullah Saleh, the former director of Afghanistan's intelligence service, and General Hilaluddin Hilal, a former Afghan deputy interior minister, have made reference to "senior Taliban intelligence officials." For details, see Filkins, as well as "Government's Writ Extended to 95% of Afghanistan: Saleh," *PakTribune.com*, March 5, 2008.

33 Ron Moreau, "Do the Taliban Get PTSD?" *Newsweek*, December 6, 2010; Sami Yousafzai and Ron Moreau, "How the Taliban Lost Its Swagger," *Newsweek*, February

27, 2011.

34 Daragahi.

35 Bill Roggio, "The Afghan Taliban's Top Leaders," *The Long War Journal*, February 23, 2010.

36 Daragahi. It is unclear whether the Taliban conducted signals intelligence collection prior to 9/11. However, given numerous accounts of Northern Alliance personnel listening to Taliban radio frequencies and impersonating Taliban fighters on the radio to gather intelligence during Operation Enduring Freedom, it is reasonable to assume that the Taliban possess a similar capability. For an example of the Northern Alliance's use of signals intelligence, see "Interview: U.S. Special Forces ODA 555," PBS Frontline, undated.

37 One article described members of the Taliban's informant network using mirrors and smoke signals to provide advance warning of U.S. patrols. See C.J. Chivers, "Afghanistan's Hidden Taliban Government," *New York Times*, February 6, 2011.

38 Antonio Giustozzi, *Decoding the New Taliban* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

39 Gretchen Peters, *Crime and Insurgency* (West Point, NY: Combating Terrorism Center, 2010).

40 See, for example, Ruhullah Khapalwak and Carlotta Gall, "Taliban Kill Afghan Interpreters Working for U.S. and its Allies," *New York Times*, July 4, 2006; Chivers, "Afghanistan's Hidden Taliban Government."

41 Carol Grisanti and Mushtaq Yusufzai, "Taliban-style Justice for Alleged U.S. Spies," NBC News, April 17, 2009.

42 Chivers, "Afghanistan's Hidden Taliban Government."

43 "Inquiry into The Role and Oversight of Private Security Contractors in Afghanistan," U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee, September 28, 2010.

44 Matthew Rosenberg, "New Wave of Warlords Bedevils U.S.," *Wall Street Journal*, January 20, 2010.

45 NATO has indicated that 10 of the 21 incidents since March 2009 where a purported member of the security forces attacked coalition troops were executed by Taliban members impersonating Afghan government security personnel, while a number of the remaining incidents were related to combat stress. With this in mind, it is possible that Taliban informants in the security forces helped provide attackers with credentials, schedules, and access. See Rahim Faeiz and Lolita Baldor, "9 Americans Dead after Afghan Officer Opens Fire," Associated Press, April 27, 2011.

46 Giustozzi, "If you have a problem, the Taliban solves it," *Herald Scotland*, January 3, 2009.

information from liaison with the ISI.⁴⁷ As noted above, the Taliban have attempted to exploit open source intelligence to gain useful information on U.S. and ISAF operations, with perhaps the best-known example being the Taliban's stated intent to search Afghanistan-related reports posted on Wikileaks to uncover possible government informants, following the

“The Taliban utilize its own network of informants in attempts to identify and eliminate suspected spies for the Afghan government and ISAF.”

failure of the Wikileaks organization to remove identifying information about informants such as their names, home villages, and family members.⁴⁸ Although the U.S. military later concluded that no intelligence sources had been compromised by the leaked documents,⁴⁹ numerous tribal elders in southern Afghanistan reportedly received death threats within days of the Wikileaks release.⁵⁰

The Site Institute has also reported that the Taliban appear to have attempted to gather information via Twitter, noting that the group's account was following the Twitter feeds of several U.S. military personnel as of early 2011.⁵¹ One of the individuals followed by the Taliban's Twitter account was a U.S. Air Force logistics officer, whose Twitter account linked to a personal blog containing discussions of military passenger screening at airports and Afghan

military personnel's unwillingness to wear the trauma plate inserts in their body armor, as well as photos of his base and Afghan National Army counterparts.⁵² In addition to social media, Richard Barrett, the coordinator for the Al Qaida Taliban Monitoring Team at the United Nations, has noted that the Taliban monitor the foreign news media and NGO publications, citing as examples the Taliban's prompt responses to a UN report on civilian casualties, and articles in *Time* and the *Sunday Telegraph*.⁵³ An International Crisis Group report in 2008 indicated that the Taliban monitor Afghan media and engage in retribution against journalists deemed unsympathetic to its cause;⁵⁴ the Taliban's prompt disavowal of a bloody suicide attack in Jalalabad in February 2011 following the airing of CCTV footage of the attack on Tolo TV indicates that the group continues to monitor Afghan media closely.⁵⁵

As illustrated above, the Taliban utilize its own network of informants in attempts to identify and eliminate suspected spies for the Afghan government and ISAF,⁵⁶ and has also occasionally forced cell phone service providers to shut down their networks in southern Afghanistan either after dark or altogether due to the group's concerns about ISAF informants equipped with cell phones.⁵⁷ This phenomenon recently occurred in Helmand, where the Taliban induced private Afghan cellular networks to shut down for two weeks in March-April 2011, affecting nearly a million cell phone users.⁵⁸ In addition, the

group has made efforts to improve its communication security (COMSEC) regime over the years to deny ISAF access to signals intelligence; Taliban COMSEC tactics now include the use of radio codes, throwaway phones, and shorter range radio communications.⁵⁹ Some reports have claimed that the Taliban use Skype for secure communications, although it is unclear how widely this is used.⁶⁰ Couriers are also used to avoid U.S. and ISAF signals intelligence efforts,⁶¹ along with use of local business owners to pass along messages.⁶²

Looking Forward

The U.S. troop surge and increased counterinsurgency operations under Generals Stanley McCrystal and David Petraeus have had a disproportionate effect on lower and mid-ranking Taliban leadership, degrading their ability to communicate, and possibly to share intelligence in a timely manner.⁶³ In addition, it remains possible that the defection or desertion of a reported 1,000 Taliban members in recent months may have degraded the Taliban's intelligence network in specific locations, as well as providing intelligence to U.S., ISAF, and Afghan forces.⁶⁴ Should Afghan citizens begin to perceive that the Taliban are in retreat and that their ability to monitor and punish transgressions has diminished, the Taliban's intelligence collection and early warning capability could be affected further.⁶⁵ At the same

Helmand Province raises questions regarding the level of success achieved by such operations.

59 Rowan Scarborough, "Taliban Outwits U.S. Eavesdroppers," *Human Events*, February 16, 2009. In his article, Scarborough quotes a "senior intelligence source" as stating that Iranian agents have advised the Taliban on how to secure its communications.

60 Antony Savvas, "Taliban Use Skype VoIP Bug to Evade Capture," *Computer Weekly*, September 15, 2008.

61 Afsar et al.

62 Peters.

63 Carlotta Gall, "Losses in Pakistani Haven Strain Afghan Taliban," *New York Times*, April 1, 2011.

64 "50 Taliban Surrender to Kandahar Government," Associated Press, April 13, 2011; Deb Riechmann, "900 Afghan Militants Join Reintegration Program," Associated Press, February 7, 2010; Yousafzai and Moreau, "How the Taliban Lost its Swagger."

65 It is difficult to assess at present whether the Taliban's intelligence networks have been degraded significantly at the village level, although recent high-profile attacks have illustrated the group's continuing ability to develop and exploit intelligence on hard targets such as the Af-

47 Seth Jones, *In the Graveyard of Empires* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2010).

48 Ron Moreau and Sami Yousafzai, "Taliban Seeks Vengeance in Wake of Wikileaks," *Newsweek*, August 2, 2010; Robert Mackey, "Taliban Study WikiLeaks to Hunt Informants," *New York Times*, July 30, 2010.

49 Robert Burns, "Wikileaks: US Says Limited Damage from Leak of Afghan War Logs," Associated Press, October 15, 2010.

50 Moreau and Yousafzai, "Taliban Seeks Vengeance in Wake of Wikileaks."

51 "Social Jihad Network: Taliban Twitter," Site Institute, February 21, 2011.

52 Ibid.

53 Richard Barrett, "What the Taliban Reads," *wwwword*, 2009.

54 "Taliban Propaganda: Winning the War of Words?" International Crisis Group, July 24, 2008.

55 Habib Khan Totakhil and Matthew Rosenberg, "Taliban in PR Scramble After Attacks," *Wall Street Journal*, February 26, 2011.

56 The Taliban have promulgated rules designed to create a system of due process for the punishment of suspected spies; it is unclear how widely this system is followed, however. See Christopher Dickey, "The Taliban's Book of Rules," *Newsweek*, December 12, 2006.

57 Night being when U.S. and ISAF forces conduct raids against suspected Taliban members.

58 Rahim Faiez and Patrick Quinn, "Taliban Turn Cell Phones Back on in Afghanistan," Associated Press, April 5, 2011. The Taliban's ability to enforce such a decree despite intensive counterinsurgency operations in

time, Afghan citizens emboldened by the Taliban's weakened capabilities and the establishment of the Afghan Local Police program⁶⁶ could provide additional intelligence to government forces, a process which ISAF claims is currently underway.⁶⁷ Lastly, attempts by NATO to vet army and police recruits,⁶⁸ as well as train counterintelligence agents, may help stanch the Taliban's efforts to infiltrate Afghan security forces.⁶⁹

Although the trends described above provide some grounds for optimism, it is worth noting that the reportedly 1,000 Taliban members who have defected or deserted represent a relatively small fraction of the group's strength. Furthermore, the majority of these personnel are from Afghanistan's northern, central, and western regions, which have historically displayed greater antipathy to the Taliban's cause.⁷⁰ Pakistani intelligence has reportedly used the presence of many Taliban commanders' families in Pakistan to ensure loyalty, while the ability of ISAF and Afghan forces to protect reintegrated Taliban members from reprisal attacks remains uncertain.⁷¹ The issue of the planned withdrawal of U.S. and ISAF forces⁷² and subsequent

handover of security responsibilities to the Afghan government is an additional source of uncertainty for Afghans as well, many of whom doubt their government's ability to provide effective security without significant foreign assistance,⁷³ and they may hedge their allegiances accordingly.

Given the aforementioned questions regarding the government's ability to reconcile Taliban members and protect civilians from reprisals, the effort to degrade the Taliban's intelligence and counterintelligence capabilities may prove to be a difficult and protracted endeavor.

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ghan Defense Ministry.

66 The ALP program serves as an armed community watch designed to maintain security at the village level. There are indications that the program has been beset by logistical problems, as well as concerns that armed ALP members may prove to be an additional source of instability. See, for example, Rob Taylor, "Afghan Local Police Stoke Fears of New-Generation Militia," Reuters, April 25, 2011. At the same time, at least some reports indicate that the ALP program is a source of concern to the Taliban leadership. For details, see "Afghanistan: Glimmers of Hope," *Economist*, May 12, 2011.

67 Matt Millham, "Coalition, Afghan Forces Continue to Seize Insurgent Weapons," ISAF HQ Public Affairs, March 10, 2011.

68 Rahim Faeiz and Heidi Vogt, "Taliban Militant Kills 2 Inside Defense Ministry," Associated Press, April 18, 2011.

69 Mohammed Abbas, "West Trains Spies to Hunt Taliban in Afghan Forces," Reuters, April 12, 2011.

70 Riechmann.

71 Ibid.

72 The recent death of Usama bin Ladin has further aggravated some Afghans' fears that the United States will seek to withdraw forces from Afghanistan without establishing stable governance first. See Alissa J. Rubin, "Afghans Fear West May See Death as the End," *New York Times*, May 2, 2011.

73 "NATO Pressuring Harper's 2014 Afghan Withdrawal," CTV, November 19, 2010. Should the U.S. and Afghan governments reach an accord on establishing permanent bases in Afghanistan after 2014, it may or may not serve to address such concerns.

Recent Highlights in Terrorist Activity

April 1, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): A mob attacked a UN compound in Mazar-i-Sharif, killing seven UN employees. The demonstrators were angry over the burning of a Qur'an by a Florida pastor in March. – *Washington Post*, April 2

April 2, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): Violent protests spread through the city of Kandahar, leaving at least nine people dead. The demonstrators were angry over the burning of a Qur'an by a Florida pastor in March. – *Washington Post*, April 2

April 2, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): Three suicide bombers attacked the Camp Phoenix NATO base in Kabul, but there were no reported casualties other than the deaths of the assailants. – *CNN*, April 2

April 3, 2011 (PAKISTAN): Two suicide bombers attacked the prominent Sakhi Sarkar Sufi shrine in the Dera Ghazi Khan district of Punjab Province, killing at least 50 people. – *AFP*, April 3

April 4, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): The Afghan Taliban relaxed an order to cell phone companies to shut down networks in Helmand Province, and mobile service will now be available from 9 AM to 3 PM. All mobile telephone networks were shut off in Helmand on March 23 in response to Taliban demands. The Taliban argue that NATO-led forces can track them through phone signals. – *Reuters*, April 4

April 4, 2011 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber attacked a bus station in Lower Dir District of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province, killing at least seven people. According to the BBC, "A member of a government-backed peace committee... was reported to have been killed in the blast." – *BBC*, April 4

April 6, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): Top Afghan official Mohammad Massoom Stanekzai confirmed that Kabul has been in peace talks with the Taliban. According to the *New York Times*, Stanekzai's remarks "were the most public confirmation by a senior Afghan official that talks with the Taliban were under way." – *New York Times*, April 6

April 7, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): A group of Taliban gunmen and suicide bombers attacked a police complex on the outskirts of Kandahar city, killing at least six members of the Afghan security forces. – *Los Angeles Times*, April 7; *New York Times*, April 7

April 7, 2011 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber in an explosives-laden vehicle killed a police constable in Quetta, Baluchistan Province. The attack targeted the house of a senior investigations officer, who was injured in the blast. – *AFP*, April 6; *Dawn*, April 8

April 7, 2011 (LIBYA): U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert Gates said that it was highly unlikely that al-Qa`ida could “hijack” the uprising in Libya. According to Gates, “I think that the future government of Libya is going to be worked out among the principal tribes. So I think that for some outside group or some element of Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb to be able to hijack this thing at this point looks very unlikely to me.” – *AFP*, April 6

April 8, 2011 (PAKISTAN): A 14-year-old boy arrested in Pakistan told the media that 350-400 “would-be suicide bombers are getting training in Mir Ali in North Waziristan...I was trained for two months and saw many boys being trained there.” According to Agence France-Presse, “He made the remarks in an interview aired Friday from his hospital bedside, where he is being treated after detonating a hand grenade in the April 3 attack that killed 50 people at a 13th-century Sufi shrine.” The boy said, “A man called Ayyaz gave us the suicide jackets on April 3 (the day of the attack). At 4 or 5 pm we visited the Sakhi Sarwar shrine and he told us each where to carry out our attacks.” – *AFP*, April 8

April 10, 2011 (CANADA): A Canadian official told the media that approximately 20 Canadians traveled to Somalia to join the al-Shabab terrorist and insurgent group. Of the 20, three may have been killed in the country. – *National Post*, April 10

April 11, 2011 (UNITED STATES): Farooque Ahmed, a 35-year-old man of Pakistani descent living in Ashburn, Virginia, was sentenced to 23 years in prison after pleading guilty to charges stemming from his role in plotting to

bomb metro stations in the Washington, D.C. area. According to one media report, “Ahmed, who has lived in the United States since 1993, was under FBI surveillance from last April until his arrest in October. According to a federal indictment, he repeatedly collected information, including video images, of train stations around Washington and gave it to people he believed were part of al-Qaida and were planning multiple bombings.” – *National Journal*, April 11

April 11, 2011 (YEMEN): Yemeni security forces killed 11 suspected al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula militants in Abyan Province. Authorities said that at least two of the killed militants were foreigners. – *Reuters*, April 11

April 13, 2011 (FRANCE): Contributors to Islamist militant web forums called for attacks on France due to that country’s ban of the Muslim full face veil. – *Reuters*, April 13

April 13, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber killed at least 10 people in Kunar Province in an attack that targeted tribal elders. Among the dead was the prominent pro-government tribal elder Haji Malik Zarin, who was a close ally of President Hamid Karzai. According to the district police chief, who spoke to Agence France-Presse, “The suicide attacker approached them, hugged Malik Zarin and then detonated the explosives strapped to his body.” – *BBC*, April 13

April 14, 2011 (GLOBAL): Al-Qa`ida second-in-command Ayman al-Zawahiri appeared in a new video calling on Arab armies to intervene in Libya to help remove Mu`ammar Qadhafi from power. He also called on Muslims to attack NATO and U.S. forces should they be deployed on the ground in Libya. – *ABC News*, April 14; *Reuters*, April 15

April 14, 2011 (UNITED STATES): According to senior FBI official Mark F. Giuliano, “While core AQ remains a serious threat, I believe the most serious threat to the homeland today emanates from members of AQAP [al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula].” AQAP realizes “the importance and value of reaching English-speaking audiences and are using the group’s marketing skills to inspire individuals to attack within the homeland.” – *Bloomberg*, April 14

April 14, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): Multiple suicide bombers attacked a police training center in Aryub Jaji in Paktia Province, killing three police officers. – *Los Angeles Times*, April 14

April 14, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber attacked a government office south of Kabul, detonating a car bomb that injured three police officers and one civilian. – *Los Angeles Times*, April 14

April 14, 2011 (PAKISTAN): Pakistani officials announced that two alleged Islamist extremists from France were arrested in Lahore in late January. One of the men is of Pakistani origin, while the other is a convert to Islam. The Frenchmen were caught meeting with an individual who is suspected of having ties to al-Qa`ida. – *AP*, April 14

April 14, 2011 (TURKEY): Turkey’s foreign minister confirmed that the Afghan Taliban will be allowed to open a political office in Turkey to help reconciliation efforts in Afghanistan. – *AFP*, April 12; *Voice of America*, April 14; *Reuters*, April 15

April 15, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber wearing a police uniform killed Kandahar provincial police chief Khan Mohammad Mujahid. His bodyguard was also killed. The slain police chief had survived three previous assassination attempts. – *Los Angeles Times*, April 16

April 15, 2011 (GAZA STRIP): Vittorio Arrigoni, an Italian pacifist who had lived in the Gaza Strip for three years, was hanged by a Salafi-jihadi group in Gaza. Arrigoni was kidnapped on April 14, and his captors demanded that in exchange for his release, Hamas had to free their leader, Hesham al-Sa`eedni, from a Hamas-run prison. Hamas was given 30 hours to release al-Sa`eedni, but failed to comply to the demand. The Salafi-jihadi group, which calls itself the Brigade of the Gallant Companion of the Prophet Muhammad bin Muslima, was previously unknown, but it is believed to be a front for a larger extremist organization, al-Jihad wal-Tawhid. On April 19, Hamas said one of the men responsible for the hanging, Abdel Rahman al-Brizar, “shot himself dead” upon being confronted by Hamas security forces. – *Telegraph*, April 15; *Reuters*, April 14; *Bloomberg*, April 19

April 15, 2011 (JORDAN): Islamist protesters attacked police in Zarqa, wounding 51 officers. The demonstrators were armed with swords, daggers and clubs. The protesters, described as Salafists, were demanding the release of 90 Islamist prisoners. – *AFP, April 15*

April 15, 2011 (JORDAN): Jordanian security forces arrested Ayman al-Balawi, the brother of triple agent Humam al-Balawi, who blew himself up at a CIA outpost in Afghanistan in December 2009. According to a Jordanian security official, Ayman al-Balawi was arrested with 102 other Salafists in the wake of violent protests in Zarqa. – *AP, April 19*

April 15, 2011 (INDONESIA): A suicide bomber targeted a mosque—situated in a police compound—during Friday prayers in Cirebon, located in West Java. At least 26 people, including police officers, were wounded by the blast. It was not immediately clear who was responsible for the attack, but authorities believe that the bomber may have been a local resident. – *Voice of America, April 15; Bloomberg, April 17*

April 16, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber wearing an Afghan army uniform detonated explosives inside a military base in Laghman Province, killing five NATO soldiers, four Afghan soldiers and an interpreter. The Afghan Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack, and said that the bomber was a sleeper agent who joined the army a month ago. – *AP, April 17*

April 16, 2011 (YEMEN): Suspected al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula militants shot and wounded a Yemeni army officer in Abyan Province. The two gunmen, who were on a motorcycle, opened fire on the officer's vehicle. – *AFP, April 16*

April 16, 2011 (ALGERIA): Islamist militants killed at least 13 Algerian soldiers at an army post in Kabyle, located 80 miles east of Algiers. Two militants died in the assault. Al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb later claimed credit for the operation. – *International Business Times, April 16; AFP, April 21*

April 18, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): A gunman wearing an Afghan army uniform opened fire inside Kabul's Defense Ministry, killing two soldiers. The gunman was shot to death, and

authorities subsequently found that he was wearing an undetonated suicide vest. Militants claimed that the high-profile attack was aimed at France's visiting defense minister, Gerard Longuet. – *AFP, April 18*

April 21, 2011 (PAKISTAN): According to Reuters, the United States will provide Pakistan with 85 "Raven" drone aircraft. The "Raven" is a non-lethal, short-range surveillance aircraft. – *Reuters, April 21*

April 21, 2011 (PAKISTAN): Militants beheaded a sympathizer of an anti-Taliban *lashkar* (tribal militia) and dumped his body on the road in the Peshawar suburbs. – *Dawn, April 22*

April 22, 2011 (RUSSIA): Russian federal officials announced the death of Khaled Yusef Mukhammed al-Emirat, identified as al-Qa`ida's top emissary to the Islamist insurgency in Russia's North Caucasus region. According to Reuters, "known by his code name Moganned, al-Emirat had been in the North Caucasus since 1999 and was shot and killed by law enforcement agencies in Chechnya." – *Reuters, April 22*

April 22, 2011 (KENYA): Kenyan police spokesman Eric Kiraithe warned that Somalia's al-Shabab terrorist and insurgent group threatened to execute attacks on Kenyan government buildings, bus terminals and places of worship over the Easter weekend. – *Bloomberg, April 22*

April 23, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): A gunman assassinated Abdul Zahir, the deputy of Helmand Province's peace council, in Lashkar Gah. – *AP, April 24*

April 23, 2011 (NORTH AFRICA): Al-Qa`ida in the Islamic Maghreb militants who are holding four French hostages want France to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan in exchange for their release. – *AFP, April 23*

April 23, 2011 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber assassinated Malik Manasib Khan, the chief of the Salarzai tribe, in Bajaur Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. Khan was the leader of an anti-Taliban militia. Four others died in the blast. – *AFP, April 23*

April 24, 2011 (IRAQ): According to Agence France-Presse, insurgents in Iraq have "stepped up deadly gun attacks against senior officials and military

leaders in a bid to undermine public trust in the security forces, officers and analysts said...The apparent trend is a major shift from the spectacular car bombs and suicide attacks that Al-Qaeda, which have been blamed for a recent spate of targeted killings in Baghdad, appeared to focus on in 2009 and much of 2010." – *AFP, April 21*

April 24, 2011 (LIBYA): U.S. Senator John McCain said that the United States should escalate its involvement in NATO airstrikes in Libya, warning that a stalemate would likely bring al-Qa`ida into the conflict. McCain said, "...nothing would bring Al-Qaeda in more rapidly and more dangerously than a stalemate." – *AFP, April 24*

April 25, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): More than 450 prisoners escaped from a jail by crawling through a 1,180-foot tunnel dug by the Taliban in Kandahar Province. – *Reuters, April 25; Christian Science Monitor, April 25*

April 26, 2011 (PAKISTAN): Pakistani Taliban fighters attacked two buses carrying naval officials in Karachi, killing four people and wounding 56. – *Reuters, April 26*

April 27, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): A veteran Afghan military pilot opened fire on trainers at a military compound near Kabul International Airport, killing eight U.S. soldiers and an American contractor. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, "The pilot opened fire about 10 a.m. after an argument with a foreign colleague at a meeting in the operations room of the Afghan air force building...The pilot, identified as Ahmad Gul Sahebi, 48, was from the Tarakhail district of Kabul province and had served in the Afghan army for decades, according to a man who claimed to be his brother." – *Los Angeles Times, April 28*

April 28, 2011 (IRAQ): A suicide bomber attacked a Shi`a mosque in Balad Ruz, north of Baghdad, killing eight people. – *Denver Post, April 29*

April 28, 2011 (PAKISTAN): A roadside bomb destroyed a bus carrying Pakistani navy personnel in Karachi, killing five people. – *Voice of America, April 28*

April 28, 2011 (MOROCCO): A remotely-detonated bomb ripped through a crowded tourist café in Marrakech, killing 16 people. Among the dead were 14 foreigners, at least half of whom were French. Morocco's interior minister said that the bomb had the hallmarks of al-Qa`ida. There was no immediate claim of responsibility. – *AP, April 29; New York Times, April 29*

April 29, 2011 (GERMANY): German police arrested three suspected al-Qa`ida members, and claimed to have averted “a concrete and imminent danger.” All three suspects were young men of Moroccan origin, and they were arrested in Düsseldorf and Bochum. Police reportedly seized large quantities of explosives during the raids. A U.S. official told reporters that at least one of the men had been trained by al-Qa`ida. According to NBC News, “The [U.S.] official added that the men had already put together ‘precursor chemicals’ for a terror attack and were planning a ‘test run’ on Friday morning. Although the test was postponed, German authorities decided to move in and arrest them.” – *Reuters, April 29; NBC News, April 29*

April 30, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): The Taliban said they will launch a spring offensive against U.S.-led forces in Afghanistan, and that the operation will begin on May 1. – *Voice of America, April 30*

April 30, 2011 (IRAQ): A suicide bomber detonated explosives at an Iraqi Army checkpoint next to a market in Mosul, Ninawa Province, killing eight people. Five of the dead were Iraqi soldiers. – *al-Jazeera, April 30; New York Times, April 30*

May 1, 2011 (GLOBAL): U.S. Special Operations forces killed Usama bin Ladin, the founder and head of al-Qa`ida, in Abbottabad, Pakistan. Documents recovered from Bin Ladin's compound show that he remained actively involved in organizing plots for the al-Qa`ida organization. According to the Associated Press, Bin Ladin's “personal, handwritten journal and his massive collection of computer files show he helped plan every recent major al-Qa`ida threat the U.S. is aware of, including plots in Europe last year that had travelers and embassies on high alert, two [U.S.] officials said...bin Laden dispensed chilling advice to the leaders of al-Qa`ida groups from Yemen

to London: Hit Los Angeles, not just New York, he wrote. Target trains as well as planes. If possible, strike on significant dates, such as the Fourth of July and the upcoming 10th anniversary of the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. Above all, he urged, kill more Americans in a single attack, to drive them from the Arab world.” – *New York Times, May 4; AP, May 13*

May 1, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber, who was reportedly a 12-year-old boy, killed four people in Paktika Province. The bomber detonated his explosives in a bazaar filled with civilians. The attack killed the head of a district council for the Shakeen area. – *Voice of America, May 1*

May 2, 2011 (GLOBAL): U.S. House Intelligence Committee Chairman Mike Rogers told reporters that at least a dozen senior al-Qa`ida leaders are likely in Pakistan. According to Rogers, “Of the 20 senior leaders in al Qaeda, at least a dozen of them we believe to be traveling around Pakistan someplace.” – *Reuters, May 2*

May 2, 2011 (INDONESIA): Abu Bakar Bashir, who is accused of involvement in the 2002 Bali bombings, commented on the death of Usama bin Ladin from his jail cell in Indonesia. Bashir said that if the news of Bin Ladin's death is true, “then it will not put al-Qa`ida to death. Osama's death will not make al-Qa`ida dead...[the] jihad will keep on going because [the] jihad movement it's not political, but Shari`a (religious law).” – *AFP, May 2*

May 3, 2011 (GLOBAL): Al-Qa`ida confirmed the death of Usama bin Ladin and vowed to avenge his death by retaliating against the United States “soon.” – *Los Angeles Times, May 7*

May 4, 2011 (FRANCE): Loic Garnier, the head of intelligence gathering at the French Interior Ministry, said that Usama bin Ladin's death reduces the risk of a terrorist attack against France. “France has moved to the background as a target for ‘core’ al Qaeda, but it remains a top priority for AQIM,” he said. – *Reuters, May 5*

May 4, 2011 (INDONESIA): Indonesian police found six unexploded pipe bombs in a river in Cirebon city. The explosives were similar to the device detonated by a suicide bomber inside a mosque in Cirebon on April 15. The latest explosives were discovered just days before leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations

(ASEAN) are to arrive in Jakarta to attend a regional meeting. According to a police spokesman, “They [militants] planned to use the six pipe bombs for another terror attack like the one which was carried out” on April 15. – *AFP, May 4*

May 5, 2011 (UNITED STATES): According to Voice of America, “U.S. officials say an initial review of documents seized from Osama bin Laden's compound shows al-Qa`ida considered carrying out a terrorist plot against the United States on the 10th anniversary of the September 11 attacks... The document says al-Qa`ida thought about tampering with rail tracks so a train would fall off the tracks in a valley or over bridge.” – *Voice of America, May 5*

May 5, 2011 (IRAQ): A suicide bomber detonated an explosives-laden vehicle at a police training center in the mainly Shi`a city of Hilla, south of Baghdad. Twenty-five people were killed by the blast. The Islamic State of Iraq later claimed responsibility. – *Los Angeles Times, May 6; New York Times, May 5; AFP, May 9*

May 5, 2011 (YEMEN): A U.S. aerial drone killed two suspected al-Qa`ida operatives in Shabwa Province. Various media reports suggested that the strike also targeted Yemeni-American cleric Anwar al-`Awlaqi, but he survived the attack. According to press reports citing U.S. officials, the incident was the first time since 2002 that the United States used a drone to attack a target in Yemen. – *Los Angeles Times, May 5; Reuters, May 6*

May 5, 2011 (SAUDI ARABIA): Saudi Arabia announced that Khalid Hathal al-Qahtani, a senior member of al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula, surrendered to Saudi authorities earlier in the week. – *Guardian, May 5*

May 6, 2011 (PAKISTAN): A U.S. drone strike killed 13 suspected militants in North Waziristan Agency of the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, “The strike involved eight missiles fired at suspected militants in a car, a restaurant and a local seminary in the Datta Khel area.” – *Los Angeles Times, May 7*

May 7, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): The Afghan Taliban launched a series of coordinated attacks in Kandahar city, killing at least two people. Taliban militants attacked the Kandahar governor's compound, as

well as an intelligence service building, a foreign special forces base, and multiple Afghan police checkpoints. Fighting continued into May 8. – *Voice of America, May 7; Christian Science Monitor, May 8*

May 7, 2011 (SOMALIA): Somalia's al-Shabab terrorist and insurgent group vowed to avenge the killing of Usama bin Ladin. – *Voice of America, May 7*

May 8, 2011 (IRAQ): Abu Huzaifa al-Batawi, the head of the Islamic State of Iraq (ISI), managed to overpower a guard inside Baghdad's Interior Ministry—where he was imprisoned—arming himself and freeing a number of al-Qa`ida-affiliated detainees. The militants proceeded to kill a number of police officers, including Brigadier Muaid Mohammed Saleh, the chief of a department responsible for combating terrorism and organized crime in eastern Baghdad. Al-Batawi was shot to death as he tried to escape the Interior Ministry compound in a vehicle. – *al-Jazeera, May 8; Los Angeles Times, May 8*

May 9, 2011 (GERMANY): A German court sentenced a German-Syrian man, only known as "Rami M.," to four years and nine months in prison for being a member of al-Qa`ida. The man confessed to a Frankfurt court that he traveled to Pakistan's tribal regions and trained with al-Qa`ida between 2009 and 2010. He also said that he engaged in attacks on the Pakistani military during that time by transporting rockets, among other duties. – *Reuters, May 9*

May 9, 2011 (IRAQ): The Islamic State of Iraq pledged its support to Ayman al-Zawahiri in the wake of Usama bin Ladin's death in Pakistan. Al-Qa`ida has not yet named Bin Ladin's successor. – *AP, May 9*

May 10, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): Hundreds of Taliban fighters attacked police checkpoints in Nuristan Province. The insurgents failed to overrun government positions, however. The operation was part of the Taliban's recently announced spring offensive. – *AP, May 10*

May 11, 2011 (YEMEN): Nasir al-Wihayshi, the leader of al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), warned that the United States faces more attacks in the wake of Usama bin Ladin's death. He said that "what is coming is greater and worse" and that the "ember of jihad is

glowing brighter." – *Voice of America, May 11*

May 13, 2011 (PAKISTAN): Two suicide bombers killed 98 people in Charsadda District, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province. The bombers targeted paramilitary recruits. The Pakistani Taliban later claimed responsibility for the attack, and the group said it was to avenge the killing of Usama bin Ladin. – *Christian Science Monitor, May 13; AFP, May 16*

May 13, 2011 (PAKISTAN): A U.S. drone killed four suspected militants in the Datta Khel area of North Waziristan Agency in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas. – *CNN, May 13*

May 14, 2011 (UNITED STATES): The FBI arrested three Pakistani-Americans on charges of providing financial and other material support to the Pakistani Taliban. According to the *New York Times*, "Arrested in the United States were Hafiz Muhammed Sher Ali Khan, 76, of Miami; and two of his sons, Izhar Khan, 24, of Miami; and Irfan Khan, 37, of North Lauderdale. Hafiz Khan is the imam at the Miami Mosque, also known as the Flagler Mosque. Izhar Khan is an imam at the Jamaat Al-Mu'mineen Mosque in Margate, Fla. Hafiz and Izhar Khan were arrested Saturday in South Florida, while Irfan Khan was arrested in Los Angeles. All three are originally from Pakistan." – *New York Times, May 14*

May 16, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): U.S. Lieutenant General David Rodriguez told reporters, "We still think that there are just less than a hundred al Qaeda operatives in Afghanistan...But what they do is a cadre-type organization that helps out to bring both resources as well as technical skills to the rest of the Taliban fighting here." – *Reuters, May 16*

May 16, 2011 (PAKISTAN): Militants shot to death a Saudi diplomat in the Khayaban-i-Shahbaz neighborhood of Karachi. The Taliban claimed responsibility. – *Dawn, May 17*

May 17, 2011 (GLOBAL): Noman Benotman, a former associate of Usama bin Ladin who now lives in London, claimed that Sayf al-Adl was acting as al-Qa`ida's interim operational leader in the wake of Bin Ladin's death. Benotman's statement, however, could not be confirmed. – *MSNBC, May 18*

May 17, 2011 (KAZAKHSTAN): A suicide bomber detonated explosives outside the headquarters of the security service in Aktobe, wounding three people. According to Agence France-Presse, "The mysterious bombing was a rare event in Kazakhstan, a majority Muslim country that prides itself on being the most stable nation in Central Asia and a hub for Western investment." – *AFP, May 17*

May 18, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber in an explosives-laden vehicle attacked a minibus carrying police cadets in Jalalabad, Nangarhar Province, killing 13 people. – *Reuters, May 18*

May 18, 2011 (IRAQ): Iraqi security forces apprehended four senior al-Qa`ida in Iraq militants in Samarra. According to Reuters, "The four men included Mikhlif Mohammed Hussein al-Azzawi, known as Abu Radhwan, suspected of leading the local group's military operations, and Qassim Mohammed Taher, accused of orchestrating a March attack on a provincial building that killed more than 50 people." – *Reuters, May 18*

May 19, 2011 (GLOBAL): Al-Qa`ida released a posthumous audio recording of Usama bin Ladin, where the deceased al-Qa`ida leader praised the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt. Bin Ladin reportedly failed to mention the uprisings in Libya, Syria and Yemen. – *Christian Science Monitor, May 19*

May 20, 2011 (UNITED STATES): The FBI and the Department of Homeland Security issued an alert to law enforcement and the energy industry that al-Qa`ida considered attacking tanker ships and other marine infrastructure in the summer of 2010. The alert was issued after U.S. authorities reviewed documents seized from Usama bin Ladin's compound in Pakistan. – *Los Angeles Times, May 21*

May 20, 2011 (PAKISTAN): A Taliban car bomb struck an armored vehicle carrying U.S. government employees to the U.S. Consulate in Peshawar. Two Americans were injured, while a Pakistani civilian was killed. The Pakistani Taliban claimed responsibility and said that it was to avenge the killing of Usama bin Ladin. – *AP, May 20*

May 21, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber detonated explosives at a military hospital in Kabul, killing six people. The

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The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and not of the U.S. Military Academy, the Department of the Army, or any other agency of the U.S. Government.

Afghan Taliban claimed responsibility.
– *CNN, May 21*

May 22, 2011 (GLOBAL): A new audio message from al-Qa`ida's Ayman al-Zawahiri appeared on Islamist web forums. The message, which was recorded before the death of Usama bin Ladin, supported the revolutions sweeping the Arab world. He called on North African Muslims to join the fight against the Libyan regime, and told Egyptians to implement Shari`a. Al-Zawahiri also addressed Syrians, telling them to continue their uprising against the regime in Damascus. – *AFP, May 22*

May 22, 2011 (PAKISTAN): Militants attacked the PNS Mehran naval aviation base in Karachi, killing 10 government security personnel. The militants managed to gain entrance to the base, and it took about 16 hours for Pakistani security forces to kill the fighters and secure the facility. According to Bloomberg, "The insurgents in Karachi damaged or destroyed U.S.-made surveillance planes in the biggest strike against a leading Pakistani military installation since a raid on the army's Rawalpindi headquarters in October 2009." As few as six militants may have been involved in the operation. – *Bloomberg, May 23; BBC, May 23; Reuters, May 24*

May 24, 2011 (KAZAKHSTAN): A suicide bomber detonated an explosives-laden vehicle outside the headquarters of the security services in Astana, causing a number of casualties. – *AFP, May 23*

May 25, 2011 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber drove an explosives-laden vehicle into Pakistan's Criminal Investigation Department (CID) in Peshawar, killing seven police commandos and one army soldier. The Pakistani Taliban claimed responsibility. – *The News International, May 26; NPR, May 25*

May 26, 2011 (PAKISTAN): Pakistan agreed to allow a CIA forensics team to examine the compound where Usama bin Ladin was killed. – *Washington Post, May 26*

May 26, 2011 (PAKISTAN): A suicide bomber in a pickup truck detonated explosives near government offices in Peshawar, killing at least 32 people. The Pakistani Taliban claimed responsibility. – *AP, May 26*

May 28, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber targeted a security gathering inside the governor's compound in Takhar Province. The blast killed two NATO soldiers from Germany, in addition to four other people. Among the dead was Afghan General Daud Daud, one of the country's most experienced anti-Taliban military commanders. The bomb also injured a provincial governor as well as the German commander of NATO troops in the region, General Markus Kneip. The assailant was wearing an Afghan army uniform. – *Los Angeles Times, May 29; McClatchy Newspapers, May 28*

May 29, 2011 (YEMEN): Yemen's government claimed that militants from al-Qa`ida in the Arabian Peninsula overran Zinjibar, the capital of Abyan Province. – *Los Angeles Times, May 30*

May 30, 2011 (AFGHANISTAN): A suicide bomber in an explosives-laden vehicle targeted the gates of an Italian military base in Herat, wounding five Italian soldiers. – *RFE/RL, May 30*

May 30, 2011 (SOMALIA): A suicide bomber and other militants attacked a peacekeeping base in Mogadishu, killing two African Union soldiers. Al-Shabab said that the suicide bomber was a Somali-American. – *New York Times, May 30; AP, June 2*

May 31, 2011 (UNITED STATES): U.S. federal officials announced that two Iraqi men living in Kentucky have been taken into custody and arraigned on a number of terrorism charges for helping al-Qa`ida in Iraq conduct operations against U.S. troops. – *CNN, May 31*

May 31, 2011 (PAKISTAN): Pakistani journalist Syed Saleem Shahzad was found murdered near the town of Mandi Bahauddin, about 75 miles southeast of Islamabad. According to the *Los Angeles Times*, "Shahzad, the Pakistan bureau chief for the Asia Times Online news website, had recently written an article saying that Al Qaeda had infiltrated the ranks of the navy. The piece also asserted that a 17-hour siege on a naval base in Karachi that was carried out by militants was meant as retaliation for the military's refusal to release a group of naval officials suspected of having militant links." – *Los Angeles Times, June 1*